Die ongelooflike avonture van Afrikaanse filmaanpassings: filmic adaptations of Afrikaans literature with specific focus on novels, youth literature and stage plays.

A dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the reward of the degree of

Master of Arts in Film Studies

Centre for Film and Media Studies
Faculty of the Humanities
University of Cape Town
2014

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Film Studies at the University of Cape Town. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

Signature: Date:

Alta du Plooy
DPLALT001
Supervisor: A/Prof Martin P. Botha
October 2014

A B S T R A C T.

South African cinemas, and Afrikaans cinemas in particular, have mostly been studied for its political, representational and socio-political value and its often-problematic furnishing in these categories. This dissertation explores different lenses through which Afrikaans cinemas can be studied. It models itself on Alexie Tcheuyap's framework in *Postnationalist African Cinemas* (2011) which directly questions the notion that African cinemas have to be revolutionary, nationalistic, subversive and/or post-colonialist. These demands were clearly set out by FEPACI in the 1960s and many scholars never revised their strategies of scholarship or kept up with the vast political, social and cultural shifts of most of the continent's cinemas and audiences. Tcheuyap argues for a new way of studying these cinemas that allows for emphases on genre, myth construction, sexuality, dance and the refraction of some cultural practices in the imagination of filmmakers, audiences and the screen (2011).

Because this study models itself on new frameworks of investigating African cinemas, it contextualises Afrikaans cinemas *within* African cinemas. Afrikaans as a language should own its connections of a history of oppression and terrorisation of around 90% of South Africans for a very long time before, during and even after apartheid. It is however imperative that the language's function, representation and literary and artistic contribution to South African culture is revised and included in studies of African cinemas. The unabashed subversiveness of Afrikaans filmmakers like Jans Rautenbach and Manie van Rensburg during the height of apartheid is often overlooked.

Even though scholarship of Afrikaans cinemas is relatively limited, the domain of the discipline is rather large with a history that spans across 83 years. The parameters for this study beacon off one sector namely that of filmic adaptations of Afrikaans literature. Specific focus will be given to

adaptations of novels, youth literature and stage plays. Adaptation theory has, like the study of African cinemas, only very recently moved away from the popular essentialist, page-to-screen view of what filmic adaptions *should* be or do. Kamilla Elliott teases out a complex history and development of scholarship and tendencies in adaptation studies in her book, *Rethinking the Novel/Film debate* (2003).

I unpack Elliott's tracing of interart wars and interart analogies and concepts of adaptation in chapter two. This proposed framework for adaptation studies is used to map some of the primary texts' film aesthetics and strategies of thematic moulding in *Roepman* (2011) in chapter two. Chapter three explores the special interaction between adaptation and particular narrative component and how the director uses a mixed film aesthetic to move between a character's interiority and exterior environment in *Die Ongelooflike Avonture van Hanna Hoekom* (2010). This chapter also analyses how Afrikaans films have posed challenges to the nuclear family – both *Skilpoppe* (2004) and *Hanna Hoekom* feature overt explorations of this theme. A contemporary stage play has never been adapted for Afrikaans film. Chapter four regards two adaptations from stage plays – *Moedertjie* (1931) and *Siener in die Suburbs* (1975) to observe how space and genre, with specific reference to melodrama, has entered into and functions in these texts.

B e d a n k i n g s (A c k n o w l e d g e m e n t s).

Vir my Skool in Kaapstad waar ek werklik ‘n klomp soorte tuistes gevind het. UCT het hierdie studie nie nét finansieël moontlik gemaak nie, maar dit ook verryk deur die fantastiese hulpbronne van die biblioteek en die African Studies-biblioteek.

Vir die *Cape Tercentenary Foundation* vir finansiële bystand.

Vir prof. Franci wie goeters oor stories in Afrikaans in my begin roer het hier rondom 2003 in Potchefstroom.

Vir Lesley wie die mees belese persoon is wie ek ken. En ook omdat ek ‘n dosent soos sy wil wees as ek eendag groot is. Dit was in háár klas waar ek ernstig oor *adaptation* begin dink het. Sy het my e-pos in 2009 oopgemaak en van toe af seker gemaak dat daar altyd vir my plek was om te leer – selfs in die letterlike vorm van ‘n baie spesiale leesstoel.

Vir prof. Martin vir sy studieleiding, sy ongelooflike lesings, sy waardevolle voorbeeld in sy deeglike voorbereiding in als wat hy aanpak en sy bemoediging. Hy het ‘n aansteeklike passie vir flieks en sy werk oor Suid-Afrikaanse cinemas is die hoeksteen van hierdie studie. Sy teerheid raak my altyd baie diep.

Vir Janette wie nie net baie betrokke by my studie was nie, maar wie ook die Groot Trek Kaap toe sielkundig moontlik gemaak het. Sy het my vol kaas, potjiekos en lemoentee gehou. Haar laataand-bemoediging in Phil Mostertstraat was als. My uncle Jan oorlaai my nogsteeds met gasvryheid en persente so baie, baie naweke.

Vir die Jones’ wie my kos en stories en wyn gegee het, en gereeld na ‘n ge-kermry in die pub moes luister. Hulle huis het my huis geword en hulle onbaatsugtige bystand tot die bittereinde is iets waarvoor ek konstant dankbaar is.

Vir Clarien in wie ek nie net ‘n fantastiese vriend gevind het nie, maar ook ‘n klasmaat van formaat en ‘n geesgenoot. Die Skool is net oneindig meer pret met my magical Nausicaä van Draperstraat in die rondte.

Vir Anneke wie van die begin af ‘n loopbaan in die akademie verstaan het en by wie ek nou, as ek terugdink, nogsteeds leer oor selfdissipline en ywer. Sy was die beste vriend wie ek ooit gehad het. HTTT.

Vir my Uncle Ken wie gereeld vir my hout opstapel om bonfires mee te maak en my altyd in sy huis, waar ek die heel grootste deel van my literatuurstudie voltooi het, verwelkom.

Vir Gerhard, Ruben en Ilze. Julle is heeltemal my alles.

Vir Jan-Louis wie sy MA met vier kinders en ‘n 25-uur-per-dag-werk in ‘n pastorie voltooi het. Hy bly my hero.

Vir Erina wie haar MA met vier kinders, ‘n 37-uur-per-dag-werk, tussen blyplekke en *sonder* Jan-Louis voltooi het. Dankie vir ure en ure se in-praat, hard-praat, proeflees en troos. Sy is my slim en beautiful profeet.

Hierdie studie dra ek op aan ouma Lettie. Jy was eerste lief vir Afrikaanse flieks en Afrikaanse stories. Kom ons kyk nog een keer saam *Arende* op ‘n bandjie. Of ‘n episode van *Feast of the Uninvited* wat jy spesiaal opgeneem het sonder die advertensies. Ek bring gemmerbier en sit die TV kliphard sodat jy nie jou gehoorstuk hoef in te sukkel nie.

Al wat ek elke oggend wil doen is om by jou in te kruip en die boekmerk vashou terwyl jy voortlees aan *Arabiese Nagte*.

C O N T E N T S.

INTRODUCTION.

AFRICAN CINEMAS, SOUTH AFRICAN CINEMAS AND AFRIKAANS CINEMAS: CONTEXTUALISATION AND REFLECTION.

"…cultural and nationalist criticism [of African cinemas] has thus far failed to give voice to the laughter, joy, sexuality and formal experimentation presently being expounded in postcolonial narratives..."

Alexie Tcheuyap, *Postnationalist African Cinemas*, 2011, p. 1

Smoking out Afrikaans adaptations: a contextualisation in African cinemas.

To start an exploration into Afrikaans cinemas it is necessary to understand and locate it in its context of the much larger sphere that defines and informs it namely African cinemas. The birth and early years of African cinemas have mostly been set in a time of colonised lenses, horrific oppression, sociological and psychological manipulation, distortion, scarring and brutality of the worst kind against most people living on the world's second largest continent. Manthia Diawara references what he calls a "second cinematic movement in Africa" to note African films that have represented colonial conflicts (Diawara, 1992, p. 152). "The majority of African spectators view [these films] with a sense of pride and satisfaction with a history [on screen] finally written from an African point of view." (ibid.) These discontents, developments and progression have however produced unique and ever-morphing results for what has been happening in African cinemas throughout colonial times up until today. African films have interesting and multiple entry points for different types of studies; stories with endless possibilities of experimentation with form, content and medium often stemming from its oral traditions. But this in itself is not unusual or distinctive. One could say the same about most cinemas around the world. African cinemas are special because it has received, relative to its vastness and age, very little academic attention.

Writers like Kenneth Harrow, Frank Ukadike, Teshome Gabriel, Manthia Diawara, Stephen Zacks and Alexie Tcheuyap have underscored its research value in the last 30 years only[1]. Urgent calls for writers, critics, filmmakers and audiences to think very seriously about African cinemas had been put out long before the 1970's and 1980's. These were deeply inspired and mobilised by thinkers like Frantz Fanon and put into practice by filmmaker and writer Ousmane Sembène and organisations like FEPACI in 1969.

This association of filmmakers, critics and writers, the *Fédération Panafricaine des Cinéastes* (FEPACI), was formed "as an urgent emancipatory body" against a Western and a colonised African film industry (Tcheuyap, 2011, p. 4). Alexie Tcheuyap describes their main preoccupations as promoting "…nation building and total liberation from colonial oppression" (2011, p. 8). Acknowledgement of the important role of this body in African cinemas is crucial. This initiative vastly contributed to the mapping out and global recognition and distribution of these cinemas (however limited that still is, relative to other cinemas around the world). It authorised African cinemas' value that warranted serious academic and critical attention. Tcheuyap describes the association as "central to the inception as well as the ideological and foundational discourse of African films" (2011, p. 4).

But almost 45 years after its emergence the landscape, content, themes, modes of distribution, technology and audiences of African cinemas have changed radically. FEPACI has, according to

[1] Some of the most important works from these writers include *Postcolonial African cinema: from political engagement to postmodernism* (Harrow, K.W., 2007), *Black African cinema* (Ukadike, N.F., 1994), *Third cinema in the third world: the aesthetics of liberation* (Gabriel, T.H., 1982), *African cinema: politics and culture*, (Diawara, M., 1992), *Toward a third cinema* (Solanas, F. & Getino, O., 1970) and *The theoretical construction of African cinema* (Zacks, S.A., 1995).

Tcheuyap, not been critical of itself and interested enough in contemporary films and their scopes to have a comprehensive understanding of its own cinescape. “Clearly, under the sway of FEPACI, pioneer African directors and critics suffocated alternative discourses by committing themselves to speak for the people” (Tcheuyap, 2011, p. 8).

The over-emphasis and insistence that “aggressively promote nation building and liberation” in African cinemas have been echoing the homogeneity of the coloniser’s lens on Africa (ibid.). The adamant agenda of nation building, the protection of the *local* (which implies at least some degree of standardising what local *is*) and the resistance against foreign influence were never properly re-evaluated. Tcheuyap cites Kenneth Harrow who asks in his 2007 book, *Postcolonial African cinema: from political engagement to postmodernism* for “…’a revolution’ (xi) in theoretical paradigms so as to ‘break with a past that feels like a straitjacket, with its visions of films tied to categories, and categories tied to political agendas…” According to Harrow theorists, amongst others, have asked the same questions about African cinemas over and over (Harrow in Tcheuyap, 2011, p. 8).

One of the fundamental premises of this research project is that African cinemas have moved or are moving beyond national and nationalist borders. This view has been adopted from Alexie Tcheuyap’s relatively new framework understands cinemas from this continent in different ways than what it has been theorised as before (*Postnationalist African Cinemas*, 2011). He makes the point that most critics and thinkers thus far have constructed a theoretical framework for African cinema (note: not *cinemas* in this case) that simply echoes FEPACI’s prescriptive and *authoritatively moralist*[2] rhetoric of what African cinemas *should* be (Tcheuyap, 2011, p. 8).

[2] This is a term that Tcheuyap uses to describe what he deems to be a problematic reading of the film *Yaaba* (d/Idrissa Ouedraogo, 1989) by Nwachukwu Frank Ukadike. I am borrowing it to apply to the broader context of the predominant scholarship on African cinemas (Tcheuyap, 2011, p. 12).

Tcheuyap highlights a few critics who operate in a type of nationalist framework in their work on African cinemas. Amongst them is Josef Gugler with his book, *Re-Imagining a Continent* (2003), where he focuses on what he deemed '[m]ost African films give major play to…" - that is: "…social, cultural and political issues" (Tcheuyap, 2011, p. 10). Another critic is K. Martial Frindéthié who wrote *Francophone African Cinema: History, Culture, Politics and Theory* in 2009. Tcheuyap argues that Frindéthié does the same. He asserts that "…African filmmakers have generally insisted their work should be both nationally and globally committed to addressing African people's specific ontological, economic, political and social concerns…" (ibid.). Tcheuyap writes that many African filmmakers, "…including those Frindéthié discusses, have rejected the ghettoization implied by an 'African ontology'" (ibid.). He adds that Frindéthié sets up African cinemas in opposition to European cinemas. These cinemas are certainly not binaries and the implication that African cinemas have to strive to be "better" or entirely differentiated from Western cinemas only points to Frindéthié's own veiled insecurities about films from this continent. Throughout his book he uses films often as mere "pretexts for weak and controvertible ideological elaborations" (ibid.).

Nwachukwu Frank Ukadike conducted a very influential study of African cinemas in 1994 when he published *Black African Cinema*. Tcheuyap by no means denies the impact of this significant work, but he remarks that "…at times [Ukadike's book] espouse[s] the same dogmatic principles advocated by FEPACI…" (2011, p. 8). There seems to be certain problematic '*musts*' that Ukadike proliferates which Tcheuyap emphasises – new ways of representing an "African culture" and a sustained collaboration between "the people" and the medium are two examples of these '*musts*' (2011, p. 9). Tcheuyap finds his notion of the authentic Africa/African and Fanonic search for a "true national culture" of an African past weaved all the way through Ukadike's undoubtedly large knowledge and extensive study of African cinemas (ibid.).

South African cinemas.

Even though South African cinemas have generally been ignored by influential studies of African cinemas and at times completely left out, it is significant to note that theorists and critics from outside South Africa who *have* written on the subject have, with a few exceptions, ventured down similar paths to those that Tcheuyap has pointed out in the writings of Ukadike et al. Close readings of South African films have been few and far between. Much focus has been awarded to the more general thematic strands of social, cultural and political contexts and frameworks often generalised to 'everyone's South Africa'. Some of the most notable and definitely very valuable works on South African cinemas are Keyan Tomaselli's *The cinema of Apartheid: race and class in South African film* in 1989, Jacqueline Maingard's *South African national cinema* in 2007 and Lucia Saks' *Cinema in a democratic South Africa: the race for representation* (2010). But note how all three make their concerns about *the national* and *national identity* clear – even in their titles. The last two titles were published as part of a series of books called *National Cinemas* (Susan Hayward *ed*.) and *New Directions in National Cinemas* respectively.

Maingard states how "…the history of South African cinema is intertwined with the appropriation, negotiation and dissemination *of nation* in South Africa." (2007, p. 2, my emphasis) Her book is specifically geared towards how "the contested site of nation" is framed, constructed and/or represented in the history of South African cinema (ibid.). But Maingard is clear in her strategy and methodology: she acknowledges that this is not the only framework in which to discuss cinema. Her intent is deliberate and fully aware of other possible frameworks to unpack South African cinemas. She consciously includes a selection of specific films "…that invoke a sense of 'the national'" (Maingard, 2007, p. 3). To explore a national cinema she rightly states that it is a task that has a country's political, historical, social and cultural contexts at the top of its list of priorities.

Martin Botha has written extensively about marginalised communities and individuals in South African cinemas – one such compilation is *Marginal lives and painful pasts: South African cinema after apartheid* which he edited and published in 2007.[3] Here he selected and steered his co-writers to overtly explore issues of national identity and representation within the context of the South African socio-political sphere. The collection is however different from many other writings on South African cinema in that it includes many close readings of films[4] and a relatively strong focus on film language and film aesthetics in some cases. The chapters also share a trajectory which describes "the national" only as fragmented, as indefinable and with a specific focus on the liminal, the perceived exceptions and the outcasts that seem to frame whatever our "national" might be. It is therefore not prescriptive of what our cinemas *should* be, but rather an open-ended, self-conscious exploration.

Botha's more recent comprehensive work on South Africa's cinematic history, *South African cinema 1896 – 2010* (2012), has proven that there is ample space for work on national cinemas. In this important document of more than 30 years of research attention is particularly directed to the scope of South Africa's film industry. Botha includes interviews with filmmakers and critics, close readings of films and he points to films that signalled significant changes in the industry. His approach is more inclusive than any other study of South African cinema in that it considers short films (of which some remarkable student films form part), feature films and a stellar tradition of documentary filmmaking in this country that very few academics have written about. But although the text is essentially about "the national" (national identities, representations and national ideologies corroborated in films), it is void of any type of *nationalist*

[3] More of Botha's explorations of this theme in South African cinemas can be found in *Women on the margin of South African society: themes in the cinema of Darrell James Roodt*' in *Kinema*, 36:Spring (2011), pp.29-40 and *Homosexuality and South African cinema* in *Kinema*, 19:Spring (2003b), pp. 39-64.

[4] One example is chapter 11, *Cinema, glamour, atrocity: narratives of trauma*, in which Lesley Marx investigates the treatment of trauma in two South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission-films (Botha, 2007, pp. 384-304).

rhetoric – one that argues for any type of *unification* or one that needs to set itself up as an *opposition* like third cinema theory would typically dictate. Botha's work on South African cinemas delves into a rich and very complicated history by being self-critical and uncompromising about not only our collective pasts being fluid but also the *constructedness* of our historiographies through cinema.

I would therefore like to make a clear distinction between studying national cinemas and Alexie Tcheuyap's arguments for considering other theoretical frameworks. Work on national cinemas in a constructive way where it serves to be informative and provide important comment on national identities and its representation and lack or distortion thereof, serves a vital role in the field of film studies. Studying *the national* in cinema is indeed a very worthy and helpful infrastructure for generating knowledge, but it is the *nationalist preoccupation* of some theorists and scholars that has become problematic. These writers are content to simply propagate FEPACI's prescriptive notions of what African cinemas *should be*.

This research project will focus on a part of "the national" – i.e. Afrikaans cinemas. It will follow models that have been set by Botha et al where there is a specific interest in South Africa. It will also operate within the framework of Tcheuyap's theory on postnationalist African cinemas which considers modes of reading films, and especially Afrikaans adaptations, in terms of aspects like bodies, film language and experimentation of form and genre.

Afrikaans cinemas.

Afrikaans cinemas have, since 1931 more than 80 years ago, had some very interesting thematic, aesthetic and formal curves. Its often highly predictable inclination towards the formulaic "musiekprent" (a type of musical in which popular Afrikaans singers act and then sing their

equally popular songs) and spectrum of slapstick (ranging from Willie Esterhuizen's banalities to Pierre de Wet and Jamie Uys' more sophisticated brand) has doomed it to be regarded as perhaps unworthy of too much academic contemplation. Although a body of critical and in-depth studies about Afrikaans slapstick and the "musiekprent" is long overdue, another aspect of Afrikaans cinemas that has been significantly under-researched, is filmic adaptations of Afrikaans texts.

Adaptation and Afrikaans films have a strong but often-overlooked bond going back to the very origins of Afrikaans cinema. The very first Afrikaans "talkie", *Moedertjie*, is a sound film with Afrikaans dialogue. It was produced in 1931[5] and it was adapted from a play called *In die Wagkamer* (*In the Waiting Room*) by an established Afrikaans playwright.[6] Some of the most popular films in Afrikaans have been adaptations - *Môre Môre*, d/Elmo de Witt, 1973; *Fiela se Kind*, d/Katinka Heyns, 1987 and *Die Geheim van Nantes*, d/Dirk de Villiers, 1969.

But, relative to the number of Afrikaans films that have been made since 1931, there have been very few adaptations from Afrikaans literature and other story mediums. This is a strange phenomenon as Afrikaans writers are often very successful – especially locally. Writers like Deon Meyer, Marita van der Vyver and Marlene van Niekerk have sold thousands of their novels. Their works have been translated into many different languages and they generally sell very well even internationally[7].

[5] *Sarie Marais* (d/Joseph Albrecht), the very first Afrikaans sound film, was also produced in 1931 but it was a musical – *Moedertjie* is therefore the first *dramatic* Afrikaans film without singing.
[6] This film is one of the primary texts for this project and it will be discussed in great detail in chapter four on stage plays that have been adapted for the screen.
[7] Some of the most well-known novels from these writers include *Triomf* (Van Niekerk, 1994), *Griet skryf 'n sprokie* (Van der Vyver, 1992) and *13 Uur* (Meyer, 2008).

There has always been an unfortunate and perhaps even rather shameful imbalance where Afrikaans cinema is concerned. The same production company who produced *Moedertjie* (1931), African Film Productions Ltd., produced *They Built a Nation – Die Bou van 'n Nasie* in 1938 which is particularly reminiscent of Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* that she made for Adolf Hitler in 1935. "*Die Bou van 'n Nasie* attempted to depict the history of the white Afrikaner people and was made to be used as part of a re-enactment of the Great Trek… As was intended the event was a great outpouring of patriotic sentiment, with the political goal to celebrate white Afrikaner nationalism. The resulting mood of nationalistic euphoria provided much of the dynamism for the National Party election victory in 1948 on its apartheid platform…" (Hees in Botha, 2012, p. 28).

Afrikaans cinemas flourished during the Apartheid era because it was subsidised by the government-implemented "Subsidy Scheme". Botha quotes Roy Armes where he estimates that between 1930 and 2008 the number of Afrikaans feature films made is close to 275, which would bring the number closer to 300 in 2014 (Armes in Botha, 2012, p. 51). "…[T]he majority of these films were shot in the 1960s and 1970s thanks to the so-called Subsidy Scheme. As in the 1950s the white Afrikaans audience for the Afrikaans-language cinema was relatively large and very stable, guaranteeing nearly every Afrikaans film a long enough run to break even as long as it provided light entertainment and dealt with Afrikaner reality and beliefs (Armes and Davies in Botha, 2012, p. 51). There was a long lull for this industry during the 1980s when the Subsidy Scheme was abandoned.

Then from 2006 the industry started to display very early signs of a possible revival with the first Afrikaans feature in a long time, *Ouma se Slim Kind*, directed by Gustav Kuhn.[8] Botha writes that the "…recent Afrikaans film revival includes more than 20 features since 2008" (2012, p. 199, footnote). Afrikaans cinema seems to do commercially very well in South Africa – especially now, but also when it had the highly contested and unfair advantage under the Subsidy Scheme. The Afrikaans audience seems to be a very loyal one – at least to the particular type of slapstick, exhaustively formulaic and broadest possible content that the industry mostly produces. Yet, it would appear as if audiences are not given a chance to support well-crafted scripts from the plethora of Afrikaans stories available to writers and filmmakers i.e. stories currently in the form of novels, youth literature and stage plays amongst other literature. The Afrikaans market has almost always proven itself to be massively loyal – why then are there so very few sturdy film scripts available? Martin Botha and Adri van Aswegen cite Pieter Fourie's reasons for the state that the mainstream South African cinema found itself in a couple of decades ago as being the disengaged attitude of the South African filmmaker towards its society (1992, p. 14). Jans Rautenbach, perhaps the most progressive and important Afrikaans filmmaker up to date, postulates at something that feels hazardously accurate:

"The screenplay is the second-to-last item on the budget. We have to cater to so many different tastes, so many age groups, so many interests that, over time, we developed the 'formula-picture'. I use the current musical as an example of a proven recipe that is now presented with some variation. We love to say 'Fun for the whole family'. And when we filled our bowl of batter made up of a little romance, some songs, some jokes, some drama, some hills, and as icing sugar a hot body and a cute face, then we look for a screenwriter, or rather, anyone who is willing to

[8] There were some Afrikaans films in the early 2000s that never received a commercial release, e.g. *Skilpoppe* (d/André Odendaal, 2004) and *Lyklollery* (d/Francois Coertze, 2001).

mix these ingredients together and come up with a story. Sometimes you find someone like that and sometimes we get four people like that. Everyone confers, everyone writes together and together they make a movie" (cited in Botha & Van Aswegen, 1992, p. 14)[9].

The current South African film industry still reflects this in a significant way. Afrikaans films that do well at the box office are *Hartiwood*[10] and largest common denominator-slapstick films. Their rhetoric mainly consists of heterosexual conquests with women who have to "be taught something" or "tamed" or others who just have very minor roles - usually clothed in skimpy garments only for comic or erotic effect. Homosexual men are often shown as wearing a lot of pink and being very camp, lesbians not at all, not even to mention any other queer identities. The toilet humour is punctuated with swearing for effect and inundated with out-dated and over-simplified South African and Afrikaans "iconographies". These include *braais* and *koesisters* and men in khaki short with rifles – also the simple-but-salt-of-the-earth type white male protagonist, or some combination of these.

The academic value of these films is, as stated before, of high importance. This research project will however consider the exceptions to these commercially successful recipe-films in the form of adaptations of some genres of Afrikaans literature. A primary aim is to include Afrikaans cinematic texts: pre- and post-Apartheid, as well as what Loren Kruger has described as *post-antiapartheid*[11] (2002, p. 113).

---

[9] This is my own translation from the original Afrikaans that Rautenbach writes in in his article *Probleme met die Afrikaanse rolprentvervaardiger* in *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe*, 9: pp. 259-267 *in* Botha & Van Aswegen.

[10] *Hartiwood* has come to describe a group of films that belongs to the genre of the "musiekprent" in which Afrikaans singers (of popular, "light" music) act and also sing their songs. This can arguably be described as a trend since the vastly popular *Liefling – die Movie* (d/Brian Webber) revived this way of filmmaking. Hartiwood is a lazy derivative of Hollywood and "Harties" (next to Hartbeespoortdam), a small Afrikaans town in the North West province rife with Afrikaans stereotypes and ideologically heterogeneous, white Afrikaans communities. Examples of more of these films are *Jakhalsdans* (d/Darrell Roodt, 2010), *Platteland* (d/Sean Else, 2011) and *As jy sing* (d/André Odendaal, 2013).

[11] *Post-antiapartheid* is a term Kruger uses to describe a status quo where "…the consequences of the enforced poverty and displacement of the majority are pressing; while the moral conviction and commitment of antiapartheid

Reflecting on literature on filmic adaptations.

Linda Hutcheon writes in her remarkable book, *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), that critics and other writers, but mainly audiences, often talk about adaptations as inferior and secondary in quality and status. Yet, as Kamilla Elliott will echo later, adaptations are *everywhere* (2006, p. 4). Adaptations, unlike parodies, regularly announce themselves very clearly through their titles. This announcement is indicative of their relationship with their "prior" text(s) (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 3). She writes that the pleasure of adaptations might come from "the repetition with variation…the comfort of ritual combined with the piquancy of surprise" (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 4).

Hutcheon's ideas about adaptations cement at least to very important points of departure in this dissertation. Firstly that to be "second" does not mean something is *secondary* or *inferior* and to be *first* does not mean something is *original* or that it has any authority (Hutcheon, 2006, p. xiii). Secondly, that for the study of adaptations, stories' *experiential* value should serve at a much higher prioritised level (2006, p. xiv). She identifies three ways in which to engage with stories: a) telling, b) showing and c) interacting (ibid). Hutcheon insists on thinking about adaptations *as adaptations* where one might be less concerned with considering the "formal entities" of the medium, but rather focus on the text's *experiential* value – that which "…represent various ways [that texts] engag[e] audiences" (ibid.).

More than the most commonly criticised point of entry of a *change of form* in adaptation studies, Hutcheon is interested in the change of *context* (2006, p. 7). She is critical of the implied assumption that adaptors simply aim to reproduce a text (ibid.). This assumption further implies a simultaneous Oedipal *envy* and *worship* in adapted texts that are problematic and misguided

solidarity have waned and in their place has come postcolonial uneven development which has created a new black elite but not eased the lives of black majority" (*Scrutiny2*, Vol.7(2), p. 113).

(ibid.). Hutcheon links the adaptation process to the three ways of experiencing stories that have been identified above. Firstly, adaptation can be seen as a formal entity that experiences transposition – "…a shift of medium or a change of frame…" – and therefore, an actual change of context (ibid.). Secondly the process should be viewed as one of *creation*. Adaptations involve re-interpretation and re-creation (Hutcheon, 2005, p. 8). It is thus an equal act of creation – secondary or inferior to no other act of creation. Thirdly, the matter of the process of *reception* of adaptations establishes it as a form of intertextuality – Hutcheon says that one "…experience[s] adaptations (*as adaptations*) as palimpsests through our memory of other works that resonate through repetition with variation." (ibid.) Hutcheon asserts that adaptations have something of a double nature - they can be regarded as autonomous works or *as adaptations* (2005, p. 6). It would be fair to say that critics and other writers – even audiences – might experience difficulties in making meaning in adapted texts because of the fluidity of these works. They simultaneously move between being axiomatic and intertextual, interpretive and resistant to *categorisation*.

The problem with framing the adaptation process as a problem.

I'd like to explore the adaptation process in an even more practical way. How do adaptations happen? And how do Afrikaans adaptations happen? In 2007 Adri Breed from the North-West University (Potchefstroom campus) wrote an MA thesis where she contemplated a possible practice for the adaptation of a complex novel into a film. Her focus was on Afrikaans adaptations in particular. After her literature review, theoretical reflection and proposed methodology, she then adapted Etienne van Heerden's 2000 novel, *Die swye van Mario Salviati* (Tafelberg) into a script for an Afrikaans feature film. She states one of her intentions with her study clearly – a large and fundamental problem with Afrikaans feature films is that there are

simply not enough of them – especially when one considers the amount of Afrikaans stories available to scriptwriters. Breed quotes André Crous:

"*Paljas* was the last big Afrikaans production. Katinka Heyns is the last great Afrikaans director. Why does it have to be this way? There are more than enough stories in contemporary Afrikaans literature – in the form of acclaimed writers Etienne van Heerden and André P. Brink - that are just waiting to be filmed. What is everyone waiting for? Why do Afrikaans screenwriters write in English?" (Crous in Breed, 2007, p. 5)[12].

Breed explains why Afrikaans adaptations are important by quoting Sheen who writes that Pierre Bourdieu argues for adaptation as a way to improve and maintain a society's level of literacy (Breed, 2007, p. 3). Bourdieu says this in the context of stories' discovery when a person is exposed to a film of which she has per chance not read the first text. The idea of adaptation as a mode of stories' *survival* is also adopted by Robert Stam (2005) – but with a different focus. He uses the Charlie Kaufman film, *Adaptation* (1999), to illustrate his point: "*Adaptation* leaves us…with a Florida swamp-like profusion of suggestive metaphors for the adaptational process: novel and adaptation as twins…or adaptations as parasites, as hybrids, or adaptations as evidencing split personality or as demonstrating the interdependence of species or genres. Most significantly, the film brings out the Darwinian overtones of the word "adaptation" itself, evoking adaptation as a means of evolution and survival" (Stam, 2005, p. 2).

Breed sets out a wonderfully clear methodology of adaptation of a very complex, multi-stranded, multi-layered and multi-charactered novel. She centres in on characters and character

[12] The Afrikaans film industry has grown and expanded considerably since Crous wrote this in 2007 – it does however apply in the question of a lack of Afrikaans filmic adaptations.

development to identify a practice of adaptation of Afrikaans literature. The theoretical part of her study unfortunately gets stuck in a fidelity discourse[13] to some extent. She feels that a screenplay "owes" a certain amount of "fidelity" to the novel/literary text (2007, p. 32). Breed does however produce a screenplay, which is of course a very important feat, and arguably the end goal when we discuss and discover adaptation processes.

Another problematic aspect of Breed's study is that she frames the adaptation process in its entirety *as a problem that needs to be solved* (however creatively) (2007, p. 12). The "problem" of the *scope* of the literary text is given priority[14] (2007, p. 15). The very root of her methodology is founded in the strange notion that a literary text is to be "cut down", selected from, "minimised" or shaped into a smaller (shorter) text for filmic adaptation. Breed's ideas about this type of strictly relational adaptation practice are deeply informed by many theorists as well as experienced screenwriters – perhaps most notably Ben Brady and Richard Krevolin's respective *how-to* methods of adaptation (Breed, 2007, pp. 33-34).

Adaptation is commonly thought to "…translate, transpose, represent [a novel] from a *written medium* to an *audiovisual medium* [of film in this case]…" (Breed, 2007, p. 5, my application of her quote). This is very problematic. It ignores and leaves large holes in the following avenues of study: a) verbal language in films; b) written words in films (in the form of pieces of texts e.g. letters or notes); c) mental/featured imaging generated by viewers in films – apart from the images on the screen; d) mental or featured imaging generated by readers of literature – apart from that which the written words describe and; e) pictures and/or pictorials in novels.

[13] I will elaborate on the fidelity debates in adaptation studies in chapter one about adaptation.

[14] Breed identifies four more sets of problems – problems of presentation, time indication, spatial indication and focalisation.

These two mediums, novels (and other literature) and films, are not nearly as simple as "written" and "audiovisual" as many adaptation theorists would make them out to be. Each consist of much reading and viewing and most often these processes happen at once. I will elaborate more on these archaic interart wars in the chapter about adaptation. It is however important to note how that which has been written about Afrikaans adaptations has obediently and predictably followed in the footsteps of adaptation theorists whose work has not been particularly constructive or genuinely explorative in its ambit to learn what these processes are. It is too often about glorifying one of the two mediums and underplaying the other.

In 2012 a student from the University of Stellenbosch, Adean van Dyk, completed his Honours thesis on the filmic adaptation of Jan van Tonder's novel, *Roepman* (2010). This project entailed a close reading of the film – something that is critically lacking in Afrikaans film studies in general. Paying careful attention to film language, aesthetics, identities, performance - Tcheuyap's "laughter, joy, sexuality and formal experimentation…" should be pivotal in the discovery and unveiling of adaptation processes (Tcheuyap, 2011, p. 1). Van Dyk includes in his project an in-depth interview that he conducted with scriptwriter and producer of the film, Piet de Jager.

Van Dyk's study, the same as Breed's, places heavy emphasis on "selecting" what should be moved from the novel to the film (2012, p. 6). It is no wonder that he also describes the adaptation process as an "adaptational problem" ("herskrywingsprobleem") (2012, p. 5, 7). What would a writer even begin to select? How can the scriptwriter be so convinced of what the supposed autonomous, self- or author-determined spirit of the text is exactly? For Van Dyk the answer lies with the author.

Piet and Salmon de Jager, two of the producers of the film, was able to get the author of the novel, Jan van Tonder, to write the first draft of the script and give notes on the 14 drafts that followed (2012, p. 12). Van Tonder was so impressed by the capturing of the essence of the text in the final shooting script and the film that he apparently said that the new texts capture the essence better than he himself captured it in his novel (2012, p. 13). He describes the "feat" of getting the author of the novel as something that very few directors and scriptwriters have managed – or that the filmmakers would deliberately not want (presumably because they would want to break away from the author's prescribed "essence" (2012, p. 12).

What I am unable to find in Van Dyk's, Breed's or any other study about adaptation that argues for "an essence" in a given text is what this essence ever really is? What form does it take? Is it thematic? Is it stylistic? Is it entirely metatextual? Is it supernatural? This line of reasoning is not only problematic because of its resistance to explain itself or study itself, but more so because it says very little about adaptation and how adaptation happens. It encumbers adaptation studies because if one argues for an "essence" in a text, then one of the only other things to study is to look at how this "essence" is preserved or discarded. This leaves scholars to do what Van Dyk did which is look at the mere "differences" and "similarities"[15] between the two texts.

Afrikaans adaptations and the parameters of this project.

At the end of this chapter I've included a list of Afrikaans adaptations to date. According to that table it would seem that there have been almost thirty Afrikaans films that have been adapted from Afrikaans novels, youth literature, stage plays, radio serials, one short story and one poem.

[15] "Differences" and "similarities" are put in inverted commas because I do not agree with the idea that there can necessarily be any type of difference or similarities between a text and its adaptation. These can occur, at its very best, on the most superficial level of telling stories. And even then, characters, actions, meaning, atmosphere, style and form can never be the same. It can also only be "different" in the way that everything in the world differs from everything else.

This is a relatively small body of work but one that has rendered very interesting filmic texts. Out of the (around) 28 films almost ten (almost 36%) have women protagonists ranging between older women (Moedertjie in *Moedertjie*), young women (Debbie in *Debbie*) and teenagers (Hanna in *Die Ongelooflike Avonture van Hanna Hoekom*). There are at least two coloured women as leads – Mamza (Lulu Strachan) in *Mamza* and Fiela (Sharleen Surtie-Richards) in *Fiela se Kind* – which are not nearly enough. That is only about 7%. It is crucial that filmmakers tell stories about the wonderfully diverse and age-old cultures of Afrikaans coloured people – and indeed an even larger range of different Afrikaans speakers.

The main focus of this study will be only on three genres of literature namely the novel, so-called youth literature and stage plays. This is by no means comprehensive enough to allege that this project covers Afrikaans adaptations. One limitation of this study is that there were several Afrikaans radio serials adapted for film in the 1970s. There is not enough space in this project to research this vast, rich stockpile of texts. Titles include *Die Geheim van Nantes* (d/Dirk de Villiers, 1969), *Salomien* (d/Daan Retief, 1972), *Môre Môre* (d/Elmo de Witt, 1973), *Snip en Rissiepit* (d/Elmo de Witt, 1973) and most recently, *Wolwedans in die Skemer* (d/Jozua Malherbe, 2012), which was a massively popular radio serial when it aired between 1982-1983 on Springbok Radio.

I've included the radio serials, one short story and one poem in the count of Afrikaans filmic adaptations in the list at the end of this chapter. I have however excluded other material like the "fotoverhaal" (a type of graphic story strip of the films that were made from the photos in magazines) and intertexts like *Hoor My Lied* (d/De Witt, 1967) and *Liefling – Die Movie* (d/Webber, 2010). There are also other very interesting cases of adaptations e.g. P.G. du Plessis' television series from 2008, *Feast of the Uninvited* (d/Heyns) that was later adapted by P.G. du

Plessis into an Afrikaans novel in 2008 called *Fees van die Ongenooides* (Tafelberg). The choice to make a relatively narrow selection of adapted literature to study is purely to be able to hone in on examples of how Afrikaans adaptations have happened in the past. I therefore acknowledge its limitations in that way and I do not purport to make any large claims on all Afrikaans adaptations, mainly because I do not believe that there *are* any large, overarching claims to make. I will however elaborate more on the application value and some shared thematic, stylistic, formal and experimental attributes of the chosen texts.

In this study I will start by unpacking Kamilla Elliot's theoretical framework for adaptations (*Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*, 2005). I found this structure most applicable and enlightening in the context of the way I'd prefer to approach the adapted texts that I've chosen. My focus is on *studying* adaptation, more than its *practice*. In this regard I do want to acknowledge the important work that Breed has done as well as the fundamental differences in our studies: her project was creative in that she actively searched for a methodology for making Afrikaans adaptations; I am more interested in *how adaptation has taken place* in Afrikaans films. This research project will be geared towards *reflecting* on adaptations and *studying* them after the filmic texts have been completed.

The next three chapters will then involve close readings of specific texts – the novel, youth literature and the stage play respectively. I will proceed to identify aspects of the films that have often been neglected because of a preoccupation with the political and often socio-political expressions in Afrikaans films. I will model my close readings, analyses and applications on those of Botha's cognisant, receptive and exploratory engagement with "the national" in South African cinemas coupled with Tcheuyap's liberated sense of the potential of post-nationalist studies of African cinemas.

LEAVE PAPGE OPEN TO PUT ADAPTATION TABLE IN

LEAVE PAPGE OPEN TO PUT ADAPTATION TABLE IN

LEAVE PAPGE OPEN TO PUT ADAPTATION TABLE IN

LEAVE PAPGE OPEN TO PUT ADAPTATION TABLE IN

LEAVE PAPGE OPEN TO PUT ADAPTATION TABLE IN

LEAVE PAPGE OPEN TO PUT ADAPTATION TABLE IN

LEAVE PAPGE OPEN TO PUT ADAPTATION TABLE IN

LEAVE PAPGE OPEN TO PUT ADAPTATION TABLE IN

LEAVE PAPGE OPEN TO PUT ADAPTATION TABLE IN

CHAPTER ONE.

A D A P T A T I O N.

"But if adaptation is theoretically impossible, it is culturally ubiquitous."

Kamilla Elliott, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*, 2003, p. 134

Introduction.

Kenneth Harrow has maintained that scholars have, for too long, asked the same questions about African cinemas (Harrow in Tcheuyap, 2011, p. 8[16]). Kamilla Elliott, Robert Stam, Linda Hutcheon and Thomas Leitch (amongst others) have argued that for too long people have asked the same questions about *adaptation*[17]. Filmmakers, critics, other writers and especially audiences spend a significant amount of time drawing comparisons between books and the films that were made from them. This research project will not concern itself too deeply with the exhaustive and elaborate, perhaps entirely hackneyed, *fidelity discourse* ever-present in adaptation studies. I will briefly unpack some of what has been written that has convinced me that these fidelity wars are essentially storms in teacups – and a way to avoid launching in-depth explorations, close readings and finely tuned analyses of filmic adaptations. It is my opinion that fidelity discourses deal only with entirely superficial, and often very tedious, matters of a field that is very rich and extends deep beyond what we're able to observe, experience and make meaning of. Texts and their adaptations warrant study with great care and with a curious,

[16] Here Tcheuyap references Harrow's 2007 *Postcolonial African Cinema: from political engagement to postmodernism*.

[17] Some of the notable works from these writers include *Rethinking the novel/film debate* (Elliott, 2003), *Literature and film: a guide to the theory and practice of film adaptation* (Stam & Raengo, 2005), *A theory of adaptation* (Hutcheon, 2006) and *Film adaptation and its discontents: from 'Gone with the wind' to 'The passion of the Christ'* (Leitch, 2007).

intrigued and explorative, rather than a judgemental, comparative and thinly veiled dismissive, inclination.

In his benchmark compilation of essays, *Literature and Film* (2005), Robert Stam teases out some of the fundamental problems of fidelity debates and describes the origins of many people's difficulty and discomfort with adaptations. He identifies eight prejudices or "sources of hostility" that operate at the core of these fidelity exchanges. The first trope concerns perhaps the most collective public criticisms of adaptation. Moviegoers often experience a sense of loss after they've gone to see a filmic adaptation of their favourite novel. Stam argues that this stems from the "a priori valorization of historical anteriority and seniority: the assumption…that older arts are necessarily better arts" (2005, p. 4). Audiences often feel that their experience of a novel has been cheapened and somehow damaged by the second, filmic text.

This particular prejudice, i.e. *that what has come before* is somehow better or has more integrity, is at the very heart of the fidelity wars. It is very common for people to be disappointed when a new text does not *recreate* their experience of the first text. This is of course a ridiculous expectation based on at least five problematic tenets: a) that a filmmaker has exactly the same experience of a "source text" as the filmgoer; b) that the filmmaker has experienced the "source text" in the same conditions (psychological, physical, emotional) as the filmgoer; c) that the filmmaker processed the "source text" in the same way as the filmgoer and should therefore share the same interpretation of it with them; d) that the filmmaker is under any obligation to reproduce exactly her or the audience's experience of the text; and e) that the "source text" is in any way *reproducible*.

It is in this context that I would like to address my concern about using the term "source text". Although I fully acknowledge the (possible and usable) "sourcefulness" of a "source text" of a filmic adaptation, I can only understand it as *one* (or multiple) of the sources of such an adaptation. That is to say that I deem it very important to regard a "source text" *without* its supposed, and very much constructed, "authority". Despite the many enlightening and liberating writings of Linda Hutcheon, Alexie Tcheuyap, Thomas Leitch, Robert Stam and Kamilla Elliott (amongst others) this is not a popular view – even today. Most theorists and critics will still speak of how great a film was because of how "faithful" it stayed to its novel. I do not mean in any way to de-value the "source text", for it cannot be devalued. I do not mean to demean it, for it can't be. The "source text" is simply intended to be studied as a set of unique and influential, but proportionate to all the other voices, ideas and constructions that inform a filmic text. I will therefore not use the term "source text", for it bears too many connotations to poisonous terms that valorise the "original" or alludes to it being a type of "life-giver". Instead I will refer to the text that has a chronological "anteriority" – or the text that came first - as the "chronotext".

Swapping "source text" for "chronotext" might not seem to have any real impact or make any significant difference on studies of adaptation. I substitute it only to alter the (or, my own) language in which we speak of adaptation. "Source" is a very loaded term, while the prefix "chrono", although admittedly indicating a type of seniority, strips the text that *happened* first of false cultural weight and authority. It also negates the idea that there is a single "source" or that the chronotext is the most important source. Another pivotal point is that "chronotext" de-valorises literature as the only sources for adaptation[18]. I want to refer back to the introduction where I discuss Linda Hutcheon's invaluable contribution to the field (2006). Instead of focussing

[18] The term "source text" in itself does directly denote literature only. But in "serious" adaptation studies, "source text" has gained a strong connotation to "serious" (read classic English) literature.

too much on the different mediums that stories travel between, she is more interested in the various contexts that stories travel between. Even more importantly, she directs our attention to the experiential value of adaptations – regardless of their medium. Hutcheon writes about many different strands of adaptation that have not received any, or very little, academic attention. It is now very common practice for any text to be adapted to any kind of medium. Texts like fan fiction and spin-off series on television have complicated more traditional theories about adaptation in a wonderful way. The internet has uncovered, and undoubtedly encouraged, a welter of stories that can travel between multiple and hybridised mediums – many of these could not even have been conceived of twenty years ago.

Stam describes a second type of "hostility" that the fidelity wars are based on as a strain of *iconophobia* that is "deeply rooted cultural prejudice against the visual arts…." (2005, p. 5). He attributes this concept as being founded in religion and classic philosophy. Images are, in this sense, *idolatry* – something that is problematised by Christian, Judaic and Muslim traditions (2005, p. 5). Partnered with iconophobia, Stam lists *logophilia*, or the "valorization of the verbal", as another source of hostility. He attributes this loyalty to the "written word" as being founded in deep-rooted nostalgia – it is "the privileged medium of communication" (2005, p. 6). This concept certainly rings true even today: children are often encouraged to *read more* and to *watch less* television. Even at the most basic levels of education children are taught to read, but very little attention is given to teach them how to *watch*.

Stam raises another issue as part of this first set of hostilities towards adaptations. He suggests that many readers do not like to see their stories "embodied" on film. He admits that his notion of "anti-corporeality" is purely speculative, but from many of my own (and overheard) conversations with friends and strangers, it would ring true that people's disappointment in

filmic adaptations of their favourite books often lie in the "wrong" or "non-sensical" or uncomfortable "embodiedness" of characters, spaces or narratives of the chronotext (Stam, 2005, p. 6, *my emphasis*). Stam's point here is not only that audiences are disappointed with their stories being "embodied" the wrong way, but that "their" stories are being embodied *at all*. "(T)he 'seen'…is regarded as the *obscene*" (Stam, 2005, p. 6). Stam quotes Vivian Sobchack in how she regards film as "…'expression of experience by experience', which deploys kinetic, haptic, and sensuous modes of embodied existence" (2005, p. 6). And it is this very direct, largely measurable involvement that the body has in the watching and making of the film ("the body of the performer"; "the body of the spectator") that, in Stam's view, discredits cinema as a substantial art form that can be studied and seriously practised. "The body-mind hierarchy which informs the image-word prejudice then gets mapped onto other binaristic hierarchies as surface-depth, so that films are dismissed as dealing in surfaces, literally 'superficial'" (Stam, 2005, p. 7).

The second set of "hostilities" that Stam outlines are less axiomatic and the hostilities stem from what seems like a less reasonable and more nebulous space.[19] Stam identifies a sometimes mysterious "presume[d]…bitter rivalry between film and literature" (2005, p. 4). This "dichotomous thinking" imposes a strange rivalry onto the novelist and the filmmaker. It assumes a mortal struggle between the two rather than the inherent "dialogue" (2005, p. 4) or in fact, interdependence, of the two mediums to survive. Stam's Darwinian parallels argue for a possible "mutual benefit and cross-fertilization" between literature and film rather than a "struggle to the death" (2005, p. 4).

[19] I have arranged Stam's "sources of hostility" differently from how he did it. I distinguish between two sets of "hostilities" where he has listed those one by one. I've used the opportunity to group them because the first set is linked closely to Kamilla Elliott's theory of adaptation on which I will focus extensively in this chapter.

Stam also points to a suspect way of thinking regarding what he calls a "myth of facility". He says that writers and audiences often think of films as "easy to make" and simply "pleasurable to watch". This can be attributed to the horrendously uninformed notion that a filmmaker simply shoots "what's there". Stam adds a very important point to the concept of "facility" which has to do with how films are *received*. People are very often made to feel guilty for watching too much "TV"[20]. Book readers are more highly regarded than TV watchers. The idea behind this is of course contained in the myth that advocates that one uses your brain less when watching something than when you are reading it (2005, p. 7).

The sixth source of hostility is "a subliminal form of class prejudice, a socialized form of guilt by association" (Stam, 2005, p. 7). Stam points out that literature in a way acknowledges cinema's popularity by associating it with "the company it keeps – the great unwashed popular mass audience…" (ibid.). He notes that filmic adaptations are custom-made for "poorer", dumber people, in the view of the literature-elitist. Filmgoers make up an audience that supposedly lacks Bourdieuan cultural capital[21] (ibid.).

The last source of hostility that Stam identifies is literature's accusation that film adaptations can only exist *parasitically* on its "source text" (2005, p. 7). He quotes Kamilla Elliott where she observes that adaptations are often perceived as inferior twice over: once because they are only a "copy" of the book, and then again because they are not seen as "pure film" – only as *adaptations* (Stam, 2005, p. 8). The so-called seven hostilities that Stam has identified in the introduction of his very influential compilation of essays co-edited with Alessandro Raengo,

[20] This might include watching TV or films on a television set. Going out to the cinema is also very often regarded a form of entertainment or something to do when "going out".
[21] "Cultural capital" refers to social resources available to people beyond financial or economic ones. These resources might present themselves as culturally specific – they can include cultural practices, fashion, education, speech, social groupings etc.

provides one of the most solid structures that I could find in adaptation literature. It guides an understanding of a deeply conservative onslaught on adaptation studies – mostly from scholars within the field.

I will now use Stam's first set of hostilities (an a-priori valorisation of historical anteriority and seniority, iconophobia and logophilia) that pertain to what Kamilla Elliott calls the word-image divide. Her work on adaptation will serve as my primary theoretical framework for this research project. Elliott's theory, which I will now unpack, forms the base of my applications in the different types of literature and cinema that I've chosen to investigate for this dissertation.

Kamilla Elliott.

Kamilla Elliott recalls how in 1910 Irving Babbit labelled adaptation as a confusion of the arts[22] (2003, p. 133). René Wellek and Austin Warren called it a theoretical impossibility in 1942[23] and Béla Balázs called all adaptations "inartistic" in 1952[24] (ibid.). In his seminal work on adaptation, *Novels into Film*, George Bluestone "adduced in 1957 that film would not 'discover its central principles' until 'the current vogue of adaptation…has run its course'" [25] (ibid.).

Elliot allocates the sustained and ferocious criticism *against* adaption into two "heresies". She identifies two of these supposed heresies that are committed "against mainstream twentieth-century aesthetic and semiotic theories" (2003, p. 133). The first "heresy" forms part of her thorough investigation of what she calls the *word-image divide*. Adaptation, according to most

[22] In *The New Laocoön: an essay on the confusion of the arts*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1910.
[23] In *Theory and Literature*. New York: Harcourt, 1942.
[24] In *Theory of Film: character and growth of a new art*. Trans. Edith Bone. New York: Dover, 1970. Originally trans. 1952.
[25] In *Novels into film*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957.

interart critics[26], assumes that words and images are *not translatable*. This only contributes to rhetoric of division between words and images. Evidently, this is not a constructive way to think about words and images. If they are *not translatable* then, according to Elliot, the question remains: what is it that travels between novel and film (2003, p. 133)?

The second "heresy" professes that form and content *can be separated*. Elliott phrases this within the context of most scholars' assumption of the as the *form-content union*. They insist that adaptation is a "semiotic heresy" (Elliott, 2003, p. 134). She writes how structuralist- and poststructuralist semiotic theory "have exploded form/content binarisms, [but] they have done so by debunking and ghosting content altogether…rendering claims that content passes between forms in adaptation even more heretical than in prior theories. Indeed, poststructuralist semiotics have fused form and content in such a way that content evaporated altogether in favor of pure form" (ibid.). Elliott describes scholars as being backed into a corner. They might like to argue that adaptation is impossible and has never occurred – that we have only witnessed allusions to it. Alternatively they have to admit to the "…semiotic heresy that content can have a life apart from form." (ibid.) "Word/image and form/content dogmas thus conspire to render adaptation a theoretical impossibility. But if adaptation is theoretically impossible, it is culturally ubiquitous. The prevalence of adaptation affronts semiotic and aesthetic theory at every turn" (Elliott, 2003, p. 134).

Elliot theorises six "unofficial concepts" of how adaptations split form and content and marry words and images. She disclaims these concepts as pure conceptual, overlapping and often conflicting (2003, p. 135). "…[The six unofficial concepts of adaptation] are by no means

[26] "Interart critics" refer to writers who are generally resistant to, or skeptical about, processes that might take place between different art forms.

presented here as ideal, prescriptive or even empirically "true," but rather as concepts operative in practice and criticism…" (ibid.).

Before unpacking these concepts of adaptation, I'd like to give a very brief overview of its trajectories and development. Elliott explores the notion of film's *double inferiority* in her book, *Rethinking the novel/film debate* (2003). She considers literature's sense of superiority but she equally evaluates cinema's (as well as other "visual" art forms) misplaced and naïve self-belief that it can find "equivalencies" for words; or that it can replace words; or that it can exist independently of words – only using it to "explain" a picture when necessary.[27] Elliott thoroughly explores and traces some of the origins of the word-image divide in order to regard the film and novel and their crisscrossing in an entirely new way. This, in my opinion, is a very balanced and fresh way of looking at adaptation studies and practices. Elliott acknowledges some fidelity issues that surface, but she discards them easily by grappling with significantly more intricate profundities and constructive discussions of adaptation strategies. She focuses on two interesting texts that have been adapted many times by many different types of filmmakers. These are *Wuthering Heights* (Emily Brontë, 1847) and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Lewis Carroll, 1865). Elliott *illustrates* (a word she might object to!) how adaptation is *part of the fabric* of any text; how it is *alive* in any text – even before that text is adapted.

Understanding the conservative roots of adaptation studies through Lessing's categories.

Elliott expands on the word-image divide by asking the very pertinent question: why are novels still equated with words and films with images (2003)? She aims an explanation at the debt that twentieth century novel- and film studies owe to eighteenth-century poetry and painting studies

[27] This is only my own reading and understanding of Elliott's theory.

(2003, p. 11). George Bluestone, who is arguably the "father of novel and film studies" named the first chapter of his 1957 book, *Novels into Film*, "The Limits of the Novel and the Limits of the Film" after Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's essay, *An essay upon The Limits of Painting and Poetry*[28] (ibid.). According to Elliot, aesthetic theory started to model itself on the "natural" sciences in its Linnaean systems of classification of the world (2003, p. 9). Eighteenth-century artists and theorists tended to examine art and other things in terms of *species*, rather than the individual being. Elliott uses the example of James Monaco in 1977 where he recites Samuel Johnson's 1745 claim: "The business of the poet…is to examine, not the individual, but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances: he does not number the streaks of the tulip". It is with this frame of mind that Monaco argues that "the word 'rose' refers to no particular rose, but rather to the general category of rose, while a film must show a specific rose"[29] (Elliott, 2003, p. 12). Why is it that the jobs of different artists are so strictly assigned? Lessing's categories apply (ibid.).

Elliott states that while Lessing advocated against interart analogies, George Bluestone did so against film adaptations from literature (2003, p. 12). She then makes one of the points on which this research project pivots around: "(I)nterart analogies speak of one art in terms of another, as though they *were* in some way each other; adaptation purports to fulfil such analogies by making one art *into* the other" (2003, p. 12, *my emphases*).

Lessing's and therefore Bluestone's insistence on *categories* (clearly defined in their distinction and separation) as an important set of pioneering work in the field of art seems unhelpful and

[28] From his 1766 *Laocoön* article. Translated by Edward Allen McCormick and published later by Bobbs-Merrill in Indianapolis in 1962.

[29] I do not agree with Monaco's argument about the specificity of words in literature – surely there are many cases where the novelist has a specific "rose" in mind when she writes. But I reference the argument to make a different point about Lessing's categories and, as Elliott puts it, "war on interart analogies" from many theorists and critics.

not conducive to the cause of bridging the word-image divide. Although it is important to identify the shortcomings of this kind of categorisation and separation of arts, it is definitely necessary for it to exist or to have existed. From these categories interart analogies emerged and commenced an important dialogue between arts. The categorisation of arts is agitated by interart analogies, but it needs to precede it. What Kamilla Elliott points to in the quote above is that these different categories or art forms might exist in certain ways except one: they cannot, and do not, *ever*, stand alone. They *are* always in a way *each other*; or they are *made into each other* (Elliott, 2003, p. 12).

An example of the persistence and reoccurrence of Lessing's categories with regards to Afrikaans cinema is clear in Adri Breed's MA dissertation about Afrikaans adaptations that were discussed in the introduction of this project. She (mis)places strong emphasis on the "selection process" that a screenwriter must apply in terms of material for the screenplay from the chronotext. This reinforces the idea that the screenwriter extracts information or material from one "species", or one category of art, to transplant it into another. Breed maintains that "…adaptation from a novel to a screenplay is the translation and interpretation of a story from one specific medium to another, namely from a *written* medium to an *audiovisual* medium" (2007, p. 13, *original emphases*). This neglects Elliott's notion that words *are* in fact images first[30] and images are alive and deeply intrinsic in any words – imag(e)-ination is very central to most of our reading experiences.

[30] Elliott explains this in terms of William Makepeace Thackeray's pictorials, Victorian pictorial initials and "prose pictures" in his 1848 novel, *Vanity Fair*.

The form-content union.

Along with the discussion of the word-image divide, Elliott explores the form-content union that seems prevalent in most adaptation theory. Ferdinand Saussure argued not only that form and content shouldn't be separated, but also that it *cannot* be separated. Elliot makes reference to this when she positions adaptation as being stuck between this "rock of post-Saussurean[31] insistence [that form and content cannot be separated]…" and the "hard place of poststructuralim's debunking of content, of original and local signifieds alike" (Elliott, 2003, p. 3).

Before outlining Elliott's proposed "templates for the various ways in which films seek to *connect* with novels in adaptation in terms of form and content" (2003, p. 136, my context), she unpacks some challenges scholars of adaptation face between these two specific mediums. A key difficulty is that in thinking about adaptation, we as scholars might find ourselves "at odds with filmmakers and audiences" (2003, p. 134). According to some of the most popular theoretical frameworks available to us, adaptation scholars have to work within Saussure's "custody". Here content cannot exist or function without its "original" or "true" form or we have to subscribe to the poststructuralists' notion that adaptation is never possible – "only an illusion of it…" – as I've mentioned earlier in the chapter (Elliot, 2003, p. 134). Elliott uses the example of the novelist Umberto Eco who negates any links between his book, *The Name of the Rose* (1980)[32] and the film that was made with the same name by Jean-Jacques Arnaud in 1986 (2003, p. 134). Even though the writer, and perhaps the filmmaker, could not and/or would not acknowledge content travelling between forms, *audiences* sure did (ibid.). This occurrence highlights how the scholar's task is not only to investigate processes behind constructs like the word-image divide or the

[31] Ferdinand de Saussure argued for the arbitrary nature of the "sign" in how the "signifier" (form) relates to the "signified" (content) (1983).
[32] According to Elliott, Eco was "handsomely paid for this theoretical impossibility" [referring to the film that was in no way an adaptation, nor did it share any links, with his book] (2003, p. 134).

form-content union, but also the vantage point of the adaptor, the audience of the chronotext, the adapted text and where they overlap as well as that of the scholar herself. As has been stated before: adaptation itself confuses these boundaries and processes – and should do.

Towards the looking glass analogies: Elliott's six unofficial concepts of adaptation.

I will now provide an overview of Kamilla Elliott's "probes [into] six mostly unofficial concepts of adaptation that *split form from content* in various ways to account for the process of adaptation" (Elliott, 2003, p. 134, *my emphasis*). These concepts not only complicate the Saussurean semiotics and poststructuralist confines of adaptation, but it also let us explore ways that adaptation might always have happened and evolved without scholars, filmmakers or audiences having noticed or thought about it. Elliott draws on body and soul analogies of form and content to formulate the six concepts of adaptation. Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* makes for a wonderful case study. It posits ideas of a shared soul between two bodies - from how the dead is "revived" in the living to how a "spirit looks out through the embodied eyes of [one's] relatives…" (Elliott, 2003, p. 135). The happenings and states of bodies (dead and alive; old and new), spirits and ghosts resonate with and reflect the intricate and vastly elaborate relations between an adaptation and its chronotext.

Elliott calls the first model the *psychic concept* of adaptation. At the start of *Wuthering Heights* Lockwood stays over in a strange house. There he dreams of Cathy and, in this dream, sees her different names; Cathy Earnshaw, Catherine Linton and Cathy Heathcliff, that she has supposedly carved on the sill. Elliott regards this sequence of Cathy's names, being *written words*, as having a "spirit". This *spirit* of the words belongs to Cathy – she is the author of these names that have been carved out. "Her graffiti and marginalia evoke her authorial identity didactically in the repeated inscription of her name" (Elliott, 2003, p. 136). Elliott extracts two ideas from

Lockwood's dream – the first contains the "spiriting" of words, and the second links the "spirit" of words to its author.

Kamilla Elliott discusses the idea of the *spirit of words* or the *spirit of a text* in terms of a process of "ghosting" content (of an adaptation). By considering content as something less solid, less visible and more translucent allows it to be more flexible, moveable and translatable. It gives content an amoebic quality. This might enable one to understand that *something* of the text, if not the text itself, can and does travel between mediums and forms. This concept is interesting in that it presumes that the "…spirit of a text originates and ends in *formless* consciousness as pre-textual spirit…" (Elliot, 2003, p. 138, *my emphasis*). This allows the content of a text to inhabit as many forms as it might like but it also undermines the ability of content to morph and shape *itself*. It privileges and authorises *form* over *content* because in this sense, form is the constant. It presumes *form* to have a stronger, indefinable power which origins are hard to trace. It accounts for readers' and viewers' affection and engagement they might feel for a specific text if they prefer certain *forms* above others. But it also does away with the idea that content can stand on its own.

According to this concept the task of adaptation then becomes to capture the spirit of a text and to produce it for an audience "through changing mediums and forms". *The spirit* becomes the component of a text that André Bazin argues for fidelity to (as opposed to so-called fidelity to the actual written word if that were possible) (Elliott, 2003, p. 138). The implications of a text being faithful to the "spirit" of another text, rather than the words or authorial meaning (if that can be considered to be constant) of the text itself, open up interesting possibilities of adaptation. But it can also turn very problematic.

Linda Seger is well known for her textbooks on how to write screenplays[33]. Elliott argues that Seger merely substitutes the form-content dichotomy with a form-spirit one[34] (2003, p. 136). I agree: the idea of the "spirit of a text" is simply a diplomatic way of participating in the fidelity discourse and its one-trick-pony rhetoric. Elliott writes that this spirit is "commonly equated with the spirit or personality of the author" (2003, p. 136). Therefore, awarding the text or words with a "spirit" ultimately participates in the discourse of a text's supposed ownership by the author. But Elliott does not discard the issue of the spirit that easily.

She makes an important second point about the psychic concept of adaptation. "[It]…does not simply advance an infusion of filmic form with authorial literary spirit: it posits a process of psychic connection in which the spirit of a text passes from author to novel to reader-filmmaker to film to viewer" (Elliott, 2003, p. 137). She ascribes the idea of the spirit of a text travelling psychically to the philosophy of the German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. "In Hegel's account, although the spirit "needs and external vehicle of expression," ultimately, form is "unessential and transient" (Elliot, 2003, p. 137).

There are indeed very useful and constructive ideas to take from this psychic notion of adaptation. It might come across as a thinly veiled participation in the fidelity discourse but perhaps it should rather be regarded as some homage being paid by an adaptation to its (or one of its) chronotexts. And this is fine, especially for scholars in order to stimulate thinking about different intertexts. It is most certainly not the aim of this research project to argue for the complete distancing of an adaptation from its chronotext(s). It is very interesting and often

[33] A common textbook for screenwriters at different institutions is Seger's *The art of adaptation: turning fact and fiction into film* (1992).
[34] Although the idea of the spirit of the text runs rife in adaptation studies, Elliott cites Linda Seger specifically for her substitution of dichotomies in her screenwriting handbook, *The art of adaptation: turning fact and fiction into film* (1992).

valuable to consider the notion of a pre-existing and omnipotent soul of a text – not only to explore ways in which it travels, but also in the very important process of making meaning. There is also pleasure to be derived from the idea that something fundamental about a text can exist extra-textually. The mysticism of travelling spirits and formless domains of content is integral to what makes adaptation studies interesting and bizarre. Elliott says that one might consider "[t]he spirit of a text originat[ing] and end[ing] in formless consciousness as pretextual spirit…and as posttextual response in the film viewer" (2003, p. 138, *my emphasis*). She quotes Hegel when he articulates some of this mystery and esotericism of the text:

"…art cannot merely work for sensuous perception. It must deliver itself to the inward life, which coalesces with its object simply as though this were not other than itself, in other words, to the intimacy of soul, to the heart, the emotional life, which as the medium of spirit itself essentially strives after freedom, and seeks and possesses its reconciliation only in the inner chamber of the spirit" (Hegel in Elliott, 2003, p. 137).

But Elliott points out some relevant problems as well. For the most part psychic theories in the 20th century have placed adaptation criticism under the supervisory umbrella of *literary* scholarship. This positioned the literary cohort as judges and juries to presumptuously determine whether a film in fact *did* capture the authorial spirit of the chronotext or not (Elliott, 2003, p. 139). I find the fundamental idea that there is only one, *true* spirit, even more problematic. If there were only one spirit it would have to be a meaning-making machine that could generate a plethora of interpretations, readings, nuances and essences. Otherwise the text's spirit would participate in a different kind of essentialisation, other than finding a single set of filmic imagery to be "faithful" to the "source text". Arguing for a single, untouchable and indefinable spirit of a text seems to be simply another way of saying that there are some constants, some solids and

some invariables which couldn't, and shouldn't, be touched when making adaptations. I am of opinion that nothing should be off-limits, solid or untouchable in the process of adaptation, or any art for that matter.

Elliot's second model maintains the idea of the spirit of a text and she describes it as the *ventriloquist concept* of adaptation. Here a filmic adaptation might treat its chronotext as a system that needs to be emptied of all signs so that it can be "filled with filmic spirits" (Elliott, 2003, p. 143). She explains it at the hand of the example of Heathcliff and Cathy from *Wuthering Heights*. If the psychic concept can be understood as Cathy's spirit traveling between her body and the words that she has carved on parts of the house (in Lockwood's dream), then the ventriloquist concept can be demonstrated by Heathcliff's necrophilic interactions with Cathy's corpse. The ventriloquial adaptation, as if the chronotext were a dummy, "props up the dead novel, throwing its voice onto the silent corpse" (ibid.).

Elliott links Roland Barthes' theory of metalanguage to this concept of adaptation. Barthes says that "…[t]hat which is a sign (namely the associative total of a concept and an image) in the first system, becomes a mere signifier in the second [system]… When the [passing sign] becomes [pure] form, the meaning leaves its contingency behind; it empties itself, it becomes impoverished, history evaporates, only the letter remains" (2003, p. 144). Elliott points out that the ventriloquist concept of adaptation makes a fundamental distinction between an *adaptation* and a *film*[35]; "…the adaptation here is a *composite* of novel and film, rather than pure film" (2003, p. 144, *my emphasis*).

[35] Elliott sets out two equations based on Barthes' typography for distinguishing between the two signification systems - where the second is always the "impoverished" one (2003, p. 144).

More common criticism of filmic adaptations "lay the blame for an adaptation's semiotic impoverishment at the feet of film, charging it with *reducing* the novel" (Elliott, 2003, p. 144, *my emphasis*). These commentaries very seldom acknowledge or are interested in discussing the *added* signifieds in the film (ibid.). "The ventriloquist view…points to adaptation's filmic enrichments of the novel. These prove threatening to literary interests" (ibid.) According to Elliott the ventriloquist concept of adaptation is helpful in that it places specific focus on what a film can *add*. Audiences often experience a chronotext to be significantly "cut" when it is made into a film[36] but Elliott argues that "the semiotic richness of moving images, music, props, architecture, costumes, audible dialogue, and more" can contribute very valuable meaning and artistic currency to a text (ibid.).

For Barthes the "impoverished signs" of the adaptation or second text does not indicate that its meaning is "dead", merely that it is weakened (Elliott, 2003, p. 148). Elliott quotes him: "One believes that the meaning is going to die, but it is a death with reprieve; the meaning loses its value, but keeps its life, from which the form of the myth will draw its nourishment" (ibid.). Then Barthes makes the same argument from Elliott's psychic concept of adaptation: "[Content] is not at all an abstract, purified essence; it is a formless, unstable nebulous condensation…there is no fixity in concepts: they can come into being, alter, disintegrate, disappear completely…[they are] ephemeral" (Barthes in Elliott, 2003, p. 148, *my emphasis*). This to a large degree addresses my own concerns with a text having only one spirit. If that spirit is formless and amoebic in the way it moves, then it provides a more meaningful way to look at chronotexts and adaptations.

[36] I am not convinced that a story necessarily has an official end or start – and therefore it can't ever be "cut down" in the way that audiences and many theorists and scholars think novels are being cut for a film to be made. A *selection* can be made from (what I think of as) *The Bigger Narrative*, and this *selection* might be included in a novel or film or any other medium. The beginning and end of this selection will then be considered the beginning and end of the novel/film/other-mediated story.

The notion of a text-spirit that is an "unstable, nebulous condensation" disrupts the form-content union in an important way. It obliterates the "union" but it also frees form from just being partnered with prescribed sets of content. It opens form up to any and all content, which promotes experimentation and innovation where form-content partnerships are concerned. Elliot calls the psychic and the ventriloquist concepts of adaptation essentially "…inseparable sides of the same coin" (2003, p. 150). These concepts regard meaning to be free to "…enter and leave [different] forms" (ibid.).

Elliott's *genetic concept*, the third concept, involves an exploration of adaptation typically from narratologists' point of view (2003, p. 150). Within this concept she suggests that narratologists like to compare narrative structure to genetic material that is, according to Seymour Chatman, ready to inhabit a "manifesting substance" (ibid). Narrative's genetic material, according to narratologists, *can* pass between forms but only "…at the higher categorical level of narrative, a category that contains both novels and films…[but not] at the basic level…of individual signs" (Elliott, 2003, p. 151, *my emphasis*).

She demonstrates this by regarding how Cathy from *Wuthering Heights* "reappears" in the genetic material that she shares with her brother Hindley, her nephew Hareton and her daughter, Cathy. Elliott notes how Brontë makes specific reference in the novel to the physical resemblance of these family members in order to maintain Cathy's presence after she has died (2003, p. 150).

She cites another example from the novel to explain an interesting phenomenon where the *genetics* of the characters seem to tease out some of the *Wuthering Heights* adaptations' "narratological deep 'genetic' structure" (2003, p. 151). Cathy's "I am Heathcliff!"-speech is,

according to Elliott, the novel's most famous articulation of the idea that Cathy and Heathcliff share a soul (ibid.). Elliott proposes that there is nothing wrong with the statement *as prose* in the novel. It makes grammatical sense. But as seen in a filmic adaptation, the "I" in the statement is witnessed to come from a particular mouth. That mouth does not belong to Heathcliff's body (ibid.).

Several adaptations of the film have tried to bridge this semiotic anomaly. Elliott recalls examples of films trying to superimpose Heathcliff's head on Cathy's body in a mirror or Heathcliff and Cathy kissing so that their faces are as close together as possible. Kiju Yoshida's 1988 adaptation shows a sexual encounter where the two characters' bodies are weaved together so their two heads appear to be on one body (2003, p. 151). Many of these adaptations have endeavoured to rather *display* the "genetics" of the narrative through a stark physical resemblance between Cathy and her relatives (Elliott, 2003, p. 152). Elliott uses Luis Buñuel and Yoshida's adaptations to illustrate how even the genetic manifestations in the characters are used to *change* the genetic structure of the narrative as it is retold in their films (2003, pp. 152-155).

Scottish director Andrea Arnold's 2011 adaptation of *Wuthering Heights* interprets the genetics of the characters in an innovative way. She refuses to maintain any physical resemblance between Cathy and Heathcliff. Cathy is pale and freckly and Heathcliff has a coffee-coloured skin and dark eyes and hair. It is rather their stark dissemblance that is emphasised. Arnold fuses their bodies in a different way. In a very dark and sensuous scene young Cathy investigates Heathcliff's wounds from a whipping he received earlier. She then proceeds to lick his wounds. Her nursing is shot in extreme close-up with an amplified sound of the transference of her saliva onto his open lacerations. She ingests bits of dried blood. This, for me, serves as a poignant

literalised example of the "genetic material" that passes between the characters and analogy for Arnold's adaptation process. In that moment Cathy *is* Heathcliff. Arnold's bold choices might also be read as a departure from typical filmic tricks where faces have to be superimposed etc.

Like the assertion that there is one, definable, universally agreed upon "spirit" of a given text, this concept might be problematic in its essentialisation of the "genetics" of a text. Elliott deduces from her examples from *Wuthering Heights* that "…deep structure cannot always be held intact and inviolate from its manifesting substances" (2003, p. 156). She writes that Brian McFarlane acknowledges that an important level of subjectivity is necessary even for the narratologist to be able to determine what the key components of a narrative are. He accepts that removing this subjectivity is impossible – an assertion which Elliott agrees with. What does however concern her is the problematic matter of McFarlane finding this removal of subjectivity in any way *desirable* (ibid.). The implication that the excision of subjectivity will provide a clearer understanding of adaptation is counter to Elliott's, and this research project's, arguments.

Based in reader response theory, Elliott's *de(re)composing concept* of adaptation *celebrates* subjectivity (2003, p. 156). In *Wuthering Heights* Heathcliff expresses the desire to be buried next to Cathy so that their corpses will decompose together and their spirits will merge (Elliott, 2003, p. 157). This concept describes a process where the "death" of one text (or the novel in this case) is necessary for new "organic life" to develop "underground" in the form of a film (ibid.). "Keith Cohen insists that an 'adaptation must subvert its original, perform a double and paradoxical job of masking and unveiling its source…redistribute the formative materials of the original and…set them askew'" (ibid.) Elliott calls this the "deconstructive one" of the two readings of the de(re)composing concept (ibid.).

Elliott suggests that Umberto Eco argues for a second type in his theory of cult objects (2003, p. 157). He argues that a cult object is formed when another work is "…[broken], dislocate[d], unhinge[d]…" so that only parts of it can be recalled (ibid.) Unhinging and dismantling the chronotext into parts (which is the novel in this case) would explain a lot about the fidelity debates. Of course when something is broken up into different parts that are to be used in building something else, certain parts would have to receive prominence over others. To explain what film adaptors have done, Elliott quotes J. Hillis Miller in an analogy about how critics write and think about *Wuthering Heights*: "Each [*Wuthering Heights* critic] takes some one element in the novel and extrapolates it toward a total explanation" (ibid.).

The trend where critics and theorists think of films as taking a single component from a novel, highlighting and building the film around it while neglecting other "equally important" parts of the chronotext, runs rife - especially in fidelity discourses, or what Elliot calls the "infidelity debate" (2003, p. 157). In almost all these cases the texts are read from *novel* to *film*, rarely the other way around. This is reminiscent of the problem of chronological authority of texts that Robert Stam has identified.[37] But Elliott suggests that if the texts were to be read as moving "in both directions", i.e. from novel to film *and* film to novel, which is almost never done, one is likely to find that some of the "infidelities" are present in the novel already. "These 'infidelities' [in films] represent [the film's] rejections of certain parts of the novel [itself] in favor of others, not total departures from the novel." (ibid.)[38]

[37] As discussed in the introduction of this project under Stam's seven "hostilities towards adaptations".
[38] To support this claim Elliott cites the example of how adaptations of *Wuthering Heights* are often criticised for "…soften[ing] and romantici[sing] the novel's Heathcliff. However, we find romanticizations of Heathcliff in the novel itself…" She argues that readers and viewers often cling to Isabella's romantic ideal" of Heathcliff – even when the character himself "scorns her for it" (2003, p. 156).

The deconstructive aspect of this model does however allow "…for other mergers of social context and literary content", according to Elliot (2003, p. 160). She uses the example of the large film production house, MGM, who made a commercially successful version of *Wuthering Heights* in 1939. William Wyler directed it. Elliott writes how this adaptation "…positions a romanticized, sanitized, socially elevated Heathcliff between the mercenary Cathy and the romantically deluded Isabella as one possessing what both women want: economic affluence and romantic appeal" (2003, p. 160). MGM knew that this would relate to female moviegoers as well. Elliott explains that even something like this that might seem "…imposed on the novel…" and taken advantage of by the film to sell more tickets is in fact "…seed[ed] in the novel, where erotics and economics intertwine at the most blatant levels of character motivation and plot" (ibid.).

Stories in a South African social- and political context are ripe for adaptation of this kind. If the chronotext has to "die" to decompose for an adaptation to recompose and rise from it then it might be worth it to ensure a change of context of some of our stories. *Proteus* (d/John Greyson & Jack Lewis, 2003) chronicles the story about two lovers imprisoned on Robben Island in the 1730s. Their love is doubly illegal: they are two *men* and of *different races*. The court trial frames the story that was adapted from court records. The adaptation uses anachronisms and experiments with Linnaean categorisation in a remarkable way. It does not attempt to preach but its socio-political message is unavoidable: how far have South Africans really come since 1735, almost 280 years later? In a legal sense: significantly far… in a social sense, perhaps not as far as one would expect.

Elliott's fifth model of adaptation is partial to film studies and film theory. Her *incarnational concept* is partly founded in the Christian theology that "…the word [is] made flesh" (Elliott,

2003, p. 161). Theorising adaptation in this way can be linked to Robert Stam's ideas about many people's problems with "embodying" the chronotext discussed in the introduction. Note an interesting tension: on the one hand audiences are wary of their chronotext being embodied, on the other hand they feel a need for their favourite chronotext to be "realised"[39]. Central to this concept of adaptation is that the "…word is only a partial expression of a more total representation that requires *incarnation* for its fulfilment, it represents *adaptation* as *incarnation*" (Elliott, 2003, p. 161, *my emphases*). *Wuthering Heights* presents Elliott with the example of the "ghostly incarnation" of the letters that spell out "Catherine" over and over – it haunts Lockwood. This incarnation of the word is then followed by Catherine's ghost that Lockwood experiences as "…audible, visible, tangible…" (ibid.).

One implication of this concept might be that words are not sufficient; that they serve as mere stepping-stones to the "real" purpose i.e. something "tangible" or "visual". This is very problematic. Elliott writes how Martin Meisel, who studied Victorian interart exchanges, noted that the "dominant direction of adaptation" steered towards "more abstract arts" being adapted to "less abstract arts" (2003, p. 162). He places emphasis on the supposed act of "realization" operating in adaptation. But Elliott says that "[t]he term "realization" implies both a lack in the original and the greater realism of the adapted art. "Yet realism, we know, is a relative and unstable concept" (ibid.). She also makes the important point that art is often regarded as looking at life from the "outside". Therefore, if one art is adapted into another art, is the adaptation not on the outside of the outside, i.e. "…one step further away from real life…" (ibid.)?

[39] Elliott cites the very apt demonstration of this in Lester D. Friedman's essay on the James Whale adaptation of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. "…if Mary Shelley wrote the *word*, James Whale made it *flesh*" (2003, p. 160, *my emphasis*).

Another side of this coin is that the word made flesh can be regarded as the word being brought "down to the level of flesh" – hence: "…adaptation often appears as sacrilege against the word" (Elliott, 2003, p. 166). Elliott explains that Christian mythology is built on the idea that people wanted to see God "realised" or *embodied* for centuries. When he did appear in human, palpable, "real" form, he was torn apart and crucified (ibid.). This is another example of how adaptations suffer a constant, catch-twenty-two type scrutiny: a large part of the film contingent will argue that novels are only complete when it is "realised" in film form (one that would necessarily "embody" signs that the novel could not) and the literature camp might say that novels shouldn't have to debase itself to the level of the common, crude and dumbed-down movie for the masses. The joke about films being novels-for-dummies is quite ubiquitous. Elliott writes that critics of performed literature often equates "realisation" with "carnalisation"[40] (2003, p. 167, *my emphasis*).

One of this research project's primary case studies is Jan van Tonder's novel, *Roepman* (Tafelberg, 2004), which was adapted into a film (2011) with the same title. The director is Paul Eilers. This adaptation and its chronotext present us with an interesting take on the incarnational concept. A significant part of *Roepman* features a very traditional lower-middle class Afrikaans family. This typically includes a Dutch Reformed Church, a *dominee* (pastor) and a patriarch who serves as a church elder or deacon. It was very important for many of these men to ensure that their families at the very least *appeared* to be God-fearing and dutiful in their church attendance and engagement. Both texts, novel and film, subscribe to a strong Christian doctrine and theme that is weaved through the narrative.

[40] It is important to note Elliott's observation that under the genetic concept the audience seeks an authorial component (or "authorial spirit" – a "mother"/genetic source) whereas in the incarnational concept, "they fear and resist it" (2003, p. 165).

It is however the story *itself* that evokes an interesting treatment of "the Word made Flesh". Elliott's incarnational concept of adaptation finds literal expression when one daughter violently discards a copy of the Bible in the trash when her father sends her boyfriend away because he doesn't belong to the "right" church. She therefore literally sacrifices the (*W*)*word*. But the *embodiment*, the "realisation" that the incarnational concept speaks of, occurs counter-intuitively. In a surprising and refreshing twist Van Tonder in the novel, and Eilers in the film, invert the theological idea of sacrifice for eternal life or this-life-as-an-appetiser-for-what-is-to-come. The young woman goes on to hang herself with the rope of the church bell during a service one Sunday morning. In this way the sacrificed, "dead" word is embodied in the *death of a body*, instead of the *resurrection of a body*. The word and the body have been sacrificed, but there is no resurrection – not for the people in the railway camp in Durban in 1960s-South Africa.

This part of the story is reflected in both the film and the novel. It ties in quite beautifully with a bigger theme of a critique and an inversion of traditionalist Afrikaner-dom and a lost mysticism – indeed: a lost theology. In this way Van Tonder's *words* in the novel are not just pregnant with a *film*. It is an example of the death of the word as well as the death of the body with no possibility of "realisation". I will elaborate more on these texts in the next chapter.

Elliott uses another of Lockwood's dreams in *Wuthering Heights* to illustrate how a public is more likely to turn on a film adaptation than on its literary counterpart. In this dream Lockwood is attending a church service when he critiques and condemns Branderham the preacher *and* his sermon. The congregation then turns on Lockwood and *not* Branderham, or, on the "reader rather than [the] author" (Elliot, 2003, p. 173). With her next model Elliott makes the point that an audience (be they readers or viewers) is much more likely to turn on a fellow "reader" than on an author (2003, p. 174). Elliot's *trumping concept* of adaptation addresses which medium,

book or film, does a better job of *representation* (ibid.). According to her, there are two schools of criticism of the adapted novel under this concept: appreciative and derogative (ibid.).

Neil Sinyard's book, *Adaptation as Criticism*, Peter Reynolds' Marxist dialectic- and Keith Cohen's deconstructive model is cited by Elliott as good examples of an adaptation that is ultimately critical (to different degrees) of the (literary) chronotext (2003, p. 174). Sinyard and Reynolds approach adaptations critically through the "appreciative" and "derogative" channels respectively while Elliott describes Cohen's approach as being closer to her trumping concept. According to Cohen "[a]daptation is a truly artistic feat only when the new version carries with it a hidden criticism of its model, or at least renders implicit (through a process we should call 'deconstruction') certain key contradictions implanted or glossed over in the original" (Elliott, 2003, p. 175). He is therefore critical of the literary camp's confidence in novels' assumed representational authority.

Elliott describes how the other side – the film camp – contributes to this concept of adaptation: "[F]ilm adaptations purport to civilize and rationalize the novel…"[41] (Elliott, 2003, p. 175). She regards this way of thinking partly as an extension of the incarnational concept. It is, according to these writers, not only important to "realise" a novel, but also to realise it *correctly* (Elliott, 2003, p. 175). The patronising stance that adaptors, readers, viewers and film critics assume if they subscribe to this way of thinking about adaptation is, in my mind, no different from the fatigued and reactionary fidelity discourse. Regarding any medium as something to be rectified or improved, is simply a way to diminish and deny that medium its rightful place and power to push

[41] Here I have generalised a trend that Elliott specifically relates to instances of where *Wuthering Heights* film adaptations have been cited to illustrate how they have "improved" the novel (2003, p. 175).

one's own agenda and preferences. Also, it does very little to contribute to the much more interesting discussion about *how* adaptations takes place.

Kamilla Elliott's looking glass model.

After unpacking her six concepts of adaptation; the psychic, the ventriloquist, the genetic, the incarnational, the de(re)composing and the trumping concepts; Elliott then draws our attention to the complex issue of *analogy* and how it operates in adaptation. People who have attempted to theorise adaptation have used analogy for many different purposes. "Officially, analogy manoeuvres between the two problematic semiotic dogmas…the unbridgeable divide between words and images and the unbreakable bond between form and content – but unofficially, it serves a number of other agendas" (Elliott, 2003, p. 184). One of the most interesting phenomena is how analogy "…navigates between the success of an adaptation as a work of art and its success as a translation of the novel" (Elliott, 2003, p. 185). Adaptation studies seem to struggle with this very fundamental question: should an adaptation be treated as a work of art on its own, *as an adaptation*? Or should it be evaluated according to its success as a narrative that travelled to a different medium?

Elliott writes that the literalised and structuralised models of analogy are well established in adaptation criticism (2003, p. 185). A third model (other than the literalised and structuralised), according to her, is deeply embedded in psychoanalytic theory and "forms an essential bridge to the fourth – being her "own" model (ibid.). She calls it the "looking glass analogies" (Elliott, 2003, p. 209) and uses Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* to explain these (2003, p. 185).

A large part of Carroll's two texts is (arguably) set in the haziness of a dream world. Borders appear and disappear like the Cheshire Cat's eerie grin. The fabric of Wonderland is not to be trusted – it does not honour any commitment between form and content to be coherent, cooperative, sensible or loyal. And it is in this world that Alice finds herself in a state of "reciprocal dreaming" (Elliott, 2003, p. 209). She is unsure whether she is dreaming and inside her own dream or whether she is in someone else's and being dreamt about. What if she is only dreaming that she is dreaming?

Wonderland is the space of delicious uncertainty; it maintains an uncanny knowledge that one is simultaneously watching and being watched. Its unreliable physicality is merely imagined or an illusion altogether. Kamilla Elliott proposes that we understand adaptation in a similar way: "(T)he endlessly inverting mutual containment of facing mirrors epitomizes the blend of opposition and inherence propounded by looking glass interart analogies" (2003, p. 210).

This model, in my view, is the most efficient for framing a study of adaptation. Elliott emphasises that within this operating system *reciprocation* is key. Like with images in facing mirrors, the refractions are not identical, but they do resemble each other. For example: left and right fields might seem inverted, or, images might look obscured by a similar looking image. When standing between facing mirrors, it is almost impossible to determine which image occurs, or has occurred, first. The mise-en-abyme effect can be applied in how we think about adaptations. The chronology of when a text is *experienced* will no doubt be different from person to person – some might encounter the novel first, some the film. But these two texts will influence each other and our experience of them through their intra- and extra-textual qualities. Also, it is very possible, and desirable, that a chronotext and its adaptation will travel to other mediums. There is no doubt that there will be some level of influence that the chronotext will have on the "new

mediums" that the story travels to. Reciprocally, a filter of interpretation and experience from the reader and/or viewer and/or listener will come into effect if the chronotext(s) is encountered second to its adaptation. It is important to note however that the inversions and resemblances occur reciprocally, but *not hierarchically* (2003, p. 10, *my emphasis*).

Another assertion is that "[l]ooking glass analogies maintain oppositions between the arts, but integrate these oppositions as an inextricable secondary identity" (2003, p. 212). There is an established "mutual inherent" rather than a "hierarchical and averse dynamic" (2003, p. 212). A key element of this concept is its implication that there are "an endless series of inversions", refractions, forms and contexts (2003, p. 212, *my emphasis*).

This model opens up really exciting opportunities for Afrikaans literature and film. Instead of proposing step-by-step essentialist adaptation methodologies, it unshackles texts and ideas for unborn texts. It creates space for the writer to experiment wildly and recklessly. It dissolves the form-content union and tunnels through the word-image divide. It is the intention with this research project to explore Afrikaans filmic adaptations not as trimmed texts or "selections" sourced from literature. Instead I will read texts of Afrikaans literature and their filmic adaptations as if they are images in many large facing mirrors where it is impossible and undesirable to try and identify the "real" image, or in this case, the "source text". The excitement and appeal of thinking about texts this way lie in the welter of refractions, distortions, treatments and appropriations of form and content; words and images.

CHAPTER TWO.

REFLECTION OF BODIES IN WATER IN *ROEPMAN* - FILMIC ADAPTATIONS OF AFRIKAANS NOVELS.

"Is it possible for a film to recreate what might be assumed to be specifically literary aspects of its source that challenge medium-specific models of adaptation by indicating unexpected resources cinema brings to matters once thought the exclusive province of literature (almost always, in this case, the novel)? …Terence Davies's 2000 adaptation of *The House of Mirth* ….'explores the silences and spaces of the [Edith Wharton] novel' as well…"

Thomas Leitch, *Adaptation studies at a crossroads,* 2008, pp. 63-77.

Introduction to the novel and the film.

Roepman is a story about a young boy who grows up in a railway camp, a type of neighbourhood for many people who worked for South African Railways, in Durban in the 1960s. These communities were generally poor-to-lower middle class – depending on the type of job they had at the railway. The young boy lives with his father and mother, grandmother, three sets of twin siblings i.e. five sisters and one brother. Typically of an Afrikaans family of the 1960's, they have a live-in domestic worker who has a little boy living with her in her tiny room in their backyard. The story in the novel is set just after Prime Minister Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd's assassination. The timeframe of the film lets the assassination take place during its narrative time, and not just as a flashback.

In 2004 Human & Rousseau published Jan van Tonder's third novel, *Roepman*. His first two novels were *Is Sagie* and *Die Kind*, with the latter being honoured with the ATKV- and FAK prizes in 1990 and 1991 respectively (Verster, 2011). *Roepman* is perhaps the writer's most autobiographical work to date. He himself was part of a large family with seven children of which he was the youngest (Verster, 2011). Van Tonder shares his childhood setting of a railway camp with that of the main character and, at an interview[42] at *Woordfees*[43] in Stellenbosch in March 2012, he shared with the audience that his railway camp had a 'roepman' or 'call man' who was, for a time, responsible for waking the railway workers if their shift started very early. The roepman used to drive around the railway camp and had a worksheet that had to be signed by the men he woke for their shifts. It was in a sense, as Abram Rademan, Timus' stern Afrikaans father of the 1960's, put it: "the lowest job a white person could do on the railway" (Van Tonder, 2006).

Roepman was included in the list of prescribed prose for grade 9 in the Western Cape. The novel was shortlisted for the WA Hofmeyr and MNet prizes. A Stellenbosch high school received a complaint from a parent who thought that its content was not suitable for learners – the book was then banned from that school's curriculum. This had somewhat of a ripple effect in other schools in the Western Cape but nothing too significant. Van Dyk highlights an important thematic aspect of the novel that might have contributed in a large way to the parents, and surely some of the learners', unease (2012, p. 3). The novel contains a relatively graphic description of child molestation and loss of innocence that is never developed or "resolved"[44] for the reader. For many people this is a wonderfully challenging and stimulating part of the novel. It

[42] The interview at *Woordfees* was conducted by Mr Stephan Meyer and moderated by Prof Dorothea van Zyl.
[43] *Woordfees* is an Afrikaans arts festival held annually in Stellenbosch.
[44] I am not suggesting that the effects and trauma of child molestation can in any way be "resolved", merely that many narratives try to do this in a very superficial way or they try to comfort the reader by showing how "well" the victim is doing after the fact.

parallels the psychology of the young boy entering puberty - and some might argue that it could even be commentary on the psychology of South Africa *as a young child* in the 1960s – moving into a difficult, national puberty after the death of Verwoerd and at a crucial time for black consciousness and liberation struggles.

In 2011 Danie Bester and Salmon de Jager from *The Film Factory* produce the filmic adaptation of *Roepman*. Veteran Afrikaans actor, Paul Eilers[45], directed the film - his directorial debut - after the producers changed their mind about a Dutch director originally appointed for the task. The film is very successful in South Africa as one of the highest grossing Afrikaans drama to date making R9m at the box office (*Screen Africa*, 2011). An American distributor signed a deal with the film's local production company, *Bosbok Ses Films*.

Van Tonder, the author of the novel, co-writes the screenplay with Piet and Salmon de Jager. This dynamic generates very interesting explorations of how the narrative, thematic and stylistic content travel between the forms of novel and film. It includes compelling and attractive usage of point of view strategies, time settings, revisionism of historiographies, specific techniques of adapting themes and employing a child narrator in both forms.

Van Tonder, the De Jagers and Eilers challenge traditional ideas of Afrikaner masculinity. The two primary spaces of the narrative, namely the railway camp and the whaling station in Durban, effectively play two notions of masculinity off against each other. In the film the railway camp visually restates the idea of a more traditional, "man-made" reality and environment while the whaling station and harbour, in sharp contrast, present the reader and viewer with the leitmotif

[45] Paul Eilers is best known as a veteran South African actor appearing in television productions such as *Vyfster* (1982) and *Sonkring* (1989). He reunited with his screenwriter for *Roepman* in 2013 to direct *Verraaiers*.

of water to signal a fluidity and viability of different masculine identities. *Roepman*'s subversion of a conventional Afrikaans male gender identity is treated in (at least) two very specific ways in the two texts. I will explore how these two functional elements move between novel and film by specifically focussing on the water-motif which "floods" public and private spaces and complicates Timus' relationships.

Bodies in *Roepman*.

Raewyn Connell explains in her seminal work, *Masculinities* (2005 – originally published in 1995), that a modern, dominant, European/American concept of masculinity is compiled of "one's behaviour [that] results from the type of person one is… (i.e.) an *unmasculine* person would behave differently: being peaceable rather that violent, conciliatory rather than dominating, "…hardly able to kick a football, uninterested in sexual conquest…" (2005, p. 67). She relates how in the 18th century women were considered different from men "in the sense of being incomplete or inferior examples of the same character" (2005, p. 68). In the 19th century masculinity was a concept that became "inherently relational" (ibid.). Masculinity did not exist except as an *opposite* to femininity. A modern European/American culture treated "women and men as bearers of polarized character types…" (2005, p. 68, *my emphasis*). Connell emphasises the point that the construction of a Western, dominant concept of masculinity is "a fairly recent historical product" and indeed "culturally specific" (2005, p. 68, *my emphasis*).

Both texts of *Roepman* rebel against this traditional concepts and construction of masculinities. It refuses to acknowledge that men are what women are *not*. The texts subscribe to Connell's fundamental principle: that there are an infinite number of *masculinities* (2005). Connell moves towards a definition of masculinity by describing it as a "gender project" (2005, p. 72). He uses this term to illuminate its construction dynamic as a *process*, rather than a "configuration" (ibid.).

There is a definitive departure in Connell's definition from what he describes as essentialist-, positivist-, normative and semiotic approaches. The essentialist approach comprises of an arbitrary "masculine essence" that is picked out and then used to describe a man's "core" (2005, p. 68). Connell describes the positivist approach as one that attempts to ascribe masculinity to "what men really are" and it often employs a masculinity-to-femininity scale (2005, p. 69). Normative approaches allude that masculinity is what men ought to be (2005, p. 70). Instead he moves towards defining masculinity as a "*place*", "*practices*" and "*effects of these practices*". This removes the concept from its previous definitions of an "object…a natural character type, a behavioural average, a norm…" (2005, p. 71).

According to Connell, masculinity's "place" lies within gender relations where gender is a structure of social practice. Masculinity's "practices" is where people interact in gender's "place" referring to the physical, psychological and social space that it occupies. The "effects of [these] practices" in masculinity's definition can be observed and/or experienced through bodies, personalities and culture (2005, p. 71).

Connell asserts that masculinity as a gender project is almost always thought of in terms of men's *bodies*. He argues that typical gender ideology is only really articulated through how men's bodies *drive* action or *limit* action (2005, p. 45). Connell elaborates on three specific conceptions of men's bodies that have dominated gender theory. These involve conceiving the body as a "machine", a "landscape" and then some theorists have tried to compromise between the two of these. Understanding the body as a machine involves a "complete biological-reductionist theory of masculinity based on the idea that we are descended from a hunting species" (Connell, 2005, p. 46). It includes the predictable idea that there is no escape from what men "really are". It is genetic and fundamentally part of their "fabric". The second idea of a man's body as a *landscape*

explicates the idea that the body is neutral, a blank canvas on which "social symbolism" will "imprint" itself (2005, p. 46). Connell concludes that these two conceptions of the body could have been read as a version of the "old nature vs. nurture controversy", and therefore, the third emerging concept of the body stems from a kind of compromise between the "machine" and the "neutral landscape". It proposes that both biological and social influences "produce gender differences in behaviour" (ibid.).

But Connell argues that all three these concepts are wrong. He proposes that, what he calls "body-reflexive practices", would lead us to a better understanding of the relationship between men's bodies and masculinity, or, more accurately, *masculinities* (Connell, 2005, p. 59). Connell emphasises the crucial importance and agency of bodies' *materiality*. He asserts that they are substantively in play in all social practices and he uses the examples of sex, work and sport to substantiate the "temperament" of bodies (2005, p. 58). He insists that bodies are both objects and agents of practice, which position them in the very centre of social processes.

Focussing on this centrality and the importance that Connell awards bodies in our relationship with masculinities, I shall now explore the novel and film's engagement with men's bodies. Both the texts take bodies' materiality very seriously. They let bodies "reflect" on social practices and then dictate a response. The *Roepman*-texts integrate what Connell calls "recalcitrant" bodies to "disrupt and subvert the social arrangements into which they are invited" deeply into the narrative (2005, p. 58, *my emphasis*).

The narrator and central character in both texts is a young, pubescent boy of thirteen, Timus Rademan, played by Paul Loots in the film. Timus' psychological and cognitive frailty, vulnerability and dependence is externalised in his underdeveloped, changing body. There are

repeated references to his small genitals (most of those references made by him), his clumsiness and his awkwardness around girls. Timus shares his contempt for his own body (his undeveloped genitals and small built) on the very first page of the novel. With regards to the boys at school with whom he frequently compares himself with in the novel he says: “The good Lord had chosen me to be left behind. All my friends were ahead of me. Miles ahead. Voices broken, hair all over their armpits and faces, huge willies” (Van Tonder, 2006, p.7). Timus asks his brother Braam, played by Eddie de Jager, about his own experiences with growing bigger in the hope that it will happen soon for himself. Braam lovingly pretends that his memory of his own development is unclear implying that Timus might not have to wait that long (although he knows it is a lot longer than Timus would want to wait).

Timus is very aware of girls. He notices the red underwear that their neighbour wears and he becomes aware of other men’s awareness of this. He admires the beauty of their domestic worker when she takes a bath and he reminisces about girls at the swimming pool and what they look like in very fine detail. In the novel he recalls how he used to carry a girl’s school case as a gesture of his interest in her. When he takes her suitcase their hands touch and Timus marks this as an important moment in the development of their relationship (that would never be). With this small but highly significant event, he tries to compensate for his inexperience with kissing girls. Timus also comments on his sisters’ bodies that he secretly watches when they move around because they think he doesn’t care or notice (2004, p.15). This type of raw, honest observation adds greatly to the three dimensionality of the characterisation of the family in the novel and film.

In the novel we meet Timus when he has already broken one of his arms. In the course of the narrative he breaks another one. His friend, Joepie, played by Ruan Wessels, has to carry his

suitcase to school. The symbolism of this literal breakdown of the body, or the deliberate subversion of a "strong, male body" is clear. Timus is left extra vulnerable - school bullies tease him not only about his "broken" body, but also "accuses" him and Joepie of homosexuality[46].

Connell uses the term "reproductive arena" to describe the way that the body is used as a very frequent point of reference, but not a "fixed set of biological *determinants"* (2005, p. 71). The novel and the film affirm the body as an important part of gender construction by forefronting it. One way in which the texts do this is to display an *array* of bodies. There are three notable displays of different or marginalised bodies in the texts. They are: *pregnant bodies*, *black female bodies* and *naked male bodies*. This is undoubtedly not only a departure, but also a plain negation of a heteronormative, hegemonic, Western, unequally-gendered treatment of the subject.

The novel has a special occupation with *pregnant bodies*. In it Timus' sister Rykie is pregnant. She is also unmarried which, in the context of a church-going Afrikaans family in 1966, was considered as something scandalous and entirely unacceptable. The film-Rykie (Beaté Olwagen) is an amalgamation of a couple of the novel-Timus' sisters and she is not pregnant. Timus' mother, Ada Rademan, played by veteran actress Rika Sennett), visits a neighbour at one point and tell her the story of how she got pregnant with three sets of twins before she had Timus (van Tonder, 2004, p. 14) Ada recalls how she kept having twins (three sets one after the other) and how difficult it was to care for them. She also mentions that her stomach was very swollen when she was carrying Timus so much so that she thought a fourth set was on the way. Timus doesn't

[46] The dynamic of boys carrying suitcases for girls as a sign of their interest in them was mentioned earlier. In this instance, Joepie carrying Timus' suitcase is construed by the older boys as Joepie being sweet on Timus. This doubles as commentary on the foreignness and disgust of homosexuality that, for these school boys, seem almost carnivalesque. It is something that they feel they *have to* make fun of, otherwise they would be "implicated" in it. This implies that homophobia might be part of traditional concepts of "the masculine".

understand when the women talk about their “eggs” – he innocently searches for “eggs of any sort” around the house (van Tonder, 2004, p.16). While Timus eavesdrops on his mother’s conversation with her friend, he looks at their dog, Snippie. She is also pregnant and about to go into labour and he counts her teats. He says that the dog got pregnant despite his mother’s attempts to scare off the male dogs by throwing cups of boiling water at them. He makes particular notice of her swollen teats – drawing direct attention to the physicality of her body.

Right before the very important dream sequence that will be discussed later in detail, Timus observes a burst pipe in the road in front of their house. He describes this as looking like a pregnant woman’s protruding stomach. He notes that it’s not as big as his sister Rykie’s bulge, but that it grew right before his eyes (Van Tonder, 2004, p. 186). The positioning of Timus amongst all these pregnant bodies underlines the narrative’s theme of change that is not only impending, but change that is so “anxious” to happen that it is visible from the outside, like a pregnant body about to give birth.

Timus secretly watches Gladys the domestic worker, played by Kholeka Dakada, take a bath in a sink tub in her room. In the novel it is described how he is mesmerised by the way her body moves during her bathing ritual. Timus gets rather lyrical about her in an a-typical way for a young, white, Afrikaner boy of 1966:

“A candle provided the only light inside the shower. Gladys undressed and kneeled, her bum resting on her heels. She scooped water with a tin can and poured it over herself. As she washed, her tits swung rhythmically from side to side. It reminded me of the lapping of the water in the harbour when a boat went past” (Van Tonder, 2004, p. 33).

This is perhaps the pivotal point of display of a "marginalised" body – that of a black woman's and it is described adoringly by Timus. To stress the point: "Her hands moved over her glistening legs and arms, sliding into her armpits and over and under her tits. I imagined how slippery her skin would feel under the suds, and how soft where it yielded under her fingers. I'd never seen anything so amazing" (Van Tonder, 2004, p. 33).

Eilers lets the lyricism of the scene with Gladys linger only for a moment, but then it turns almost comical. Gladys calls Timus out when she hears a sound outside her room – implying that she knows that he often watches her. She tells him promptly to go to bed and he runs away. Eilers makes an interesting choice here: he does not give Gladys' body much space but instead lets the camera enjoy the body of John, Gladys' husband when he comes to visit her. This is scene is not described in the novel. Eilers has the character of John (Richard Lukunku) walk towards the camera panning up slowly, showing off his tall physique framed beautifully by the two bottles of bright orange cool drinks that he cheerfully clinks together as part of his song.

Eilers' serious effort to showcase men's bodies is evident in one of the first shots of the film. This involves a sequence of close-ups of the body of Joon the roepman, played by John-Henry Opperman. In this important set of point of view-shots the audience is really watching what Timus is watching. Joon is getting dressed while it is still dark outside. This very early shot of Timus' preoccupation with bodies establishes Eilers' tone in the treatment of this for the rest of the film. Joon's body is never entirely naked, but the camera moves close enough to underline Timus' curiosity about Joon's presumed casualness, his level of comfort, perhaps his nonchalance about his own body and how it is dressed. He comes in the door and touches his face and then there is a reverse shot of Timus spying on him through the window. Joon carefully buttons his railway uniform blouse, pulls up his trousers and puts on his shoes. He fastens his watch and

observes himself in the mirror while smoothing his hair and touching his face again. He is thin and his frame modest, but also tall and, in this sequence, often shot with slight low angle to establish his stature – not only his physical stature, but also his social stature in his community and his moral stature in the narrative.

In another scene Timus takes a bath with his older brother, Braam (Eddie de Jager). In an unusual moment for Afrikaans cinemas to date, Braam is shown in an almost full body shot – completely naked. There are many examples of naked men in slapstick comedy[47] where it is meant to be funny and/or where men are in the process of eliciting sex. The strategy here is perhaps primarily a narrative one – Timus is (again) watching his brother's body, quietly envious and endlessly curious. But the shot allows for more than this. It seems to purely enjoy this character's body for a couple of seconds before it lunges back into the story. Eilers' interpretation is a clear and interesting refraction of van Tonder's theme of male bodies in its alternative and multiple environments. It also underscores Connell's idea of body-reflexive practices: Timus' social interaction is fully dictated by the materiality of his and his brother's bodies. Eilers' text underlines the film's excellent suitability to award the deserved agency to bodies that Connell suggests for understanding the complexities of masculinities.

The texts position Timus for the reader and/or viewer in specific ways to illuminate Timus' brand of masculinity (or one of the ways we can understand an alternative masculinity). One way in which the novel does this is by flooding the diegesis with women. This situates Timus not in contrast to women, but *among* them. Instead of proposing that masculinity stands opposite to femininity or is relational to it in any way, it encourages a self-reflexive and inclusive understanding. Because Timus identifies himself as a man, our usual, culturally-engineered

[47] See the films of Leon Schuster and Willie Esterhuizen.

understanding of masculinities is disarmed when he is (seemingly) seamlessly integrated in the welter of female presence, energy and issues in the story. Timus' presence in the narrative is set up in a way that is non-relational in the understanding of what men and women are or are supposed to be. We are not encouraged to construct meaning of masculinities by making observations of what women are *not*. This mechanism creates a specific fluidity that informs the reading of gender, not as a spectrum with two ends, but rather as a pool with no ends or opposites, in both texts.

To illustrate: in the novel Timus lives with five sisters, his mother, his grandmother and the domestic worker on a small, cramped property. He also takes a deep interest in his neighbour's affair with his Indian domestic worker. As mentioned earlier, he is able to describe the girls in his school in great detail. He even talks about his disabled neighbour girl and Joon's mother. He comments on his grandmother's smell and he keeps count of how often his mother has cried. His preoccupation with the women is emphasised in his explorations and discoveries of their bodies and minds.[48] He seems to be genuinely interested in their psychology and their secrets.

It is this very mechanism of the texts' explicit and insistent focus on a changing boy, who does not fit any traditional idea of the "masculine" or the opposite of the "feminine" that suggests or even rallies for alternative Afrikaner masculinities. Timus operates as what Connell calls our perception of a person who behaves in an "unmasculine" way (2005, p. 67). The narrative portrays him like this deliberately and subversively: Timus seeks *peace* between the violently squabbling Gouws couple next door, he looks to *conciliate* rather than aggravate or dominate, he is a terrible rugby player and has no real interest in the sport – competitively or actually, but he plays to avoid being called a "sissie". Timus says about his rugby coach: "Meneer said better

[48] There are typically fewer women in the film, as there are significantly fewer characters pro rata to the novel.

positional play than mine, you wouldn't find anywhere, not in any C team in any school in Durban." Although he is very critical of the way he looks, he displays a mature "unmasculine" acceptance of some of his other perceived inferiorities.

Rather than standing in as an opposite to the 'feminine', Timus figures closer to something that can be regarded as opposite to the more generic *male* figures. His father serves as a force that constantly makes him aware of his own inadequacies. Abram Rademan (played by veteran Afrikaans actor, Deon Lotz), who Van Tonder called "a generic Afrikaans father from the 1960's", features as perhaps the most recognisable opposition (*Interview at Woordfees,* 2012). Timus says in the novel: "I always expected to find (his) one eye fixed on mine, with the other one looking me over from head to toe, searching for something else that might be wrong." (Van Tonder, 2006, p. 7) Karen Horney reads this fear of inadequacy as the larger and more important component of the castration complex (1993, p. 142). In the context of these two texts, it is certainly Timus' concerns about his *inadequacies* (rather than his fear of the "castrating mother", or the "castrated mother") that unveil possible alternative masculinities and its nuances.

Braam, Timus' older brother, is an important part of the male contingency in the narrative but I shall not pay attention to his role as it has already been discussed. In the novel there is an older boy who molests Timus – Ruben - and a neighbour boy – Hein - who bullies him. In the film these characters morph into Timus' neighbour, Hein Gouws, in the film who is bravely played by the late Andrew Thompson. He starts off by gaining Timus' trust when he saves him from his own bully friends and promises to show Timus his imported magazines with pictures of naked girls. He also gives him a whale tooth (a much more elaborate motif in the novel) and takes Timus up the water tower. He then lures him into the bushes by the dunes to force himself on Timus.

The fourth and perhaps most important male figure who wields an influence on Timus in this narrative is Joon the *roepman*. Joon is painted as a Christ-like figure. It has been discussed how Eilers lets the camera linger on Joon's body. Joon is cross-eyed so that it looks like he is always looking up which is where his nickname, *Stargazer*, comes from. He is painted as a person who can perform miracles which is perhaps best demonstrated during the dream sequence with the burst pipe in the street. In the course of this sequence Joon also "cures" the cripple neighbour girl. He also takes Timus' cast off as if the water from the burst pipe has miraculously healed his arm. Ouma Makkie, played by veteran South African actress, Lida Botha, makes a direct reference to Joon as Jesus Christ[49] (Van Tonder, 2006). Although Timus temporarily loses faith in Joon during the course of the narrative when he doesn't save him from Hein's assault in the bushes, he certainly identifies with the *roepman* most out of all the male figures.

To cement the idea of Joon as a type of saviour, the writers of the film and Eilers also made the very effective choice to write a scene where Joon "baptises" Timus. The older boys bully Timus by making him drink a lot of water and then they won't let him relieve himself. Timus wets himself and is very embarrassed and humiliated. Joon comes and saves the situation by taking Timus into a small pool of water and dumping his body in it so that he is entirely soaked. This covers the evidence of Timus wetting himself. Joon then takes Timus home and away from the bullies. This scene is a valuable example of Kamilla Elliott's looking glass analogies of adaptation. This is a sequence that is not described in the novel, but alive in it. Eilers inverts the phallic hosepipe that is described in the novel into a pool of water in the film that effectively feminises this scene and complicates the idea of a masculine saviour. It underlines the pressing theme of imminent change that is necessary. This baptism sequence is also a good starting point to begin

[49] Another example that invites the comparison between Joon and Jesus is when Joon performs a miracle by making the coins in a young boy's hand multiply like Jesus did with the fish and bread (Van Tonder, 2006, p. 98).

to think about *water*. This is the second very profound motif in the narrative. I shall now explore how water and bodies as leitmotifs come together to constitute an effective refraction from novel to film.

Eilers' refraction of water in *Roepman* from the novel to the film.

The novel is a very interior one where the story of the Rademans is told in the first person by Timus. It relies strongly on Timus' memories and retellings of past events. These are typically a child's recounts – details that often seem trivial are included in the story and weaved all through Timus' stream of consciousness. One account flows into the next and into the next and the reader is only brought back to the "primary" story when Timus snaps out of his daydream or interior dialogue. Timus' daydreams in the novel do not function in a way that necessarily propels the narrative forward. They are endless "alleyways" or "brooks" that let the reader get to know Timus. His stream-of-consciousness-type drifts are reminiscent of streams dripping into a type of Jungian lake. This specific fabric of the narrative aids to the understanding of something of Timus' murky and cloudy visceral experiences and make-up. It is often difficult for films to tap into this resource of daydreams and its interiorities. However I will argue that *Roepman* the film has transposed some of the interiority and social mechanics of the novel by employing water as a specific visual leitmotif.

Reference to the importance of water as a motif is made on the very first couple of pages in the novel. Timus comments on the water pressure where they live in the railway camp. He says that it is stronger than anywhere else he'd ever seen. He compares the garden hosepipe jerking around from the pressure to the movements of an angry snake. Right after this, he recalls the time he scared the domestic worker with the hosepipe and how she dropped her tub of hot bath water. Timus also references the large water tower that is visible from their house. All these

elements that contain water keep popping up – the hosepipe, the tub and the water tower all work together to unite *bodies* and *water*. Water as a motif seems to echo its own physical composition i.e. its *fluidity* to suggest a new way of thinking about gender construction and masculinities, in particular. This is then mediated and deployed through Timus.

The novel starts with Timus being scolded by his father, Abram, for lying about how he broke his arm. He is told to go and wait in the bathroom, which becomes a seminal space in the both texts. The film specifically uses this space to merge images of bodies and water. This space allows for the important and intimate exchanges to take place in the sequence where Timus takes a bath with his brother. The bathroom is a liminal space where Timus does a lot of waiting and thinking. Waiting – for his father to come and give him a hiding and thinking – about events leading up to his punishment and more daydreaming i.e. our exposition to the character.

The bathroom as a narrative space allows for another very important thematic strategy in both texts. Water operates as a viler motif and not just the expected symbol of cleansing or femininity as it does in mythology, esotericism etc. Timus seems unable to produce a kind of "foam" when he urinates – an apparent symbol of an adult male's urine. Braam and he devise a way to artificially produce this "foam" by urinating on laundry detergent to impress his neighbour. Both texts let Timus declare, by the end of the story, that he doesn't care about being able to produce this "foam" anymore. In fact he says that he now aims at the side of the toilet bowl when he urinates, setting himself free of the pressure of puberty or an "expected masculinity". The character's development is therefore saturated with an intentional subversion of a typical "masculine achievement" or any "masculine competition". By the end of *Roepman* Timus has grown-up, but in a very deliberate "non-masculine" or "un-masculine" way.

The water motif floods the rest of the narrative and characters' psychologies as well. In the novel Abram, Timus' father, likes to water the lawn and the plants in the garden. The image of him with the garden hose is reinterpreted in the film and becomes a recurrent scene. This is where the viewer sees him feeling guilty about his daughter's attempted suicide; it is where he has a change of mind about letting his other daughter dance at her 21st birthday party and it is where he changes his mind about the dancing when H.F. Verwoerd dies. The novel weaves the phallic hosepipe with a narrative strand where Abram chops down trees in the neighbourhood. These two detachable phalluses[50] work in a wonderful cyclical allegory for Abram's arrested and narrow political mind-set. He waters plants to let them grow and then he cuts them down: and repeat… In this case water as a motif emphasises his stasis. His tears are replaced by the spraying of the water when Verwoerd dies (in the film), as he himself is not allowed to cry.

The image of the hosepipe spraying water is not confined to Abram. The film has a short scene where the sisters, Timus and Boytjie, the domestic worker's little boy, are playing with water in the back yard. This is a prelude to the later dream sequence with the burst pipe in the street. This short sequence in the film may seem very unimportant but it is indeed an incisive moment in Eilers' adaptation choices. It lets the play around water integrate races – the children are not unaware of their different races or classes but the difference seems entirely frivolous in their sport of spraying each other with water and running around. Their play is interrupted only when Abram, a symbol of Afrikaner nationalism, breaks up their fun, but is really their crucial activity of being together and enjoying each other's company. *Water* is their enabler, the object and

[50] Slavoj Žižek says that "phallus" in psychoanalytic theory is "detachable" – "…[The father] has something that provides him with symbolic authority…you *are* not phallus, you *possess* phallus. Phallus is, as it were, something *attached* to you. Like the king's crown is his phallus – something you put on and this gives you authority" (In *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema: parts 1, 2, 3*, d/Sophie Fiennes, 2006, *my emphases*).

subject of their sport. The lyrical value behind its deeply suggestive links to "fluidity" as a base to start to understand or engage with a wide range of seemingly contrasting, typically colonial ideas around class, gender and race construction is a significant accomplishment of this adaptation.

Eilers' use of water's texture as an allegory for a fluidity and mobility of masculinities is further deployed in the film's use of *space*. The hard, man-made space of the *railway camp*, the train tracks and the trains shunting day in and day out is positioned next to the *ocean*. Again, water as a motif suggests a fluid and unstable texture (in relation to the "hard" and "solid" space of the railway) in the narrative's exploration of themes of masculinities. Eilers' looking glass-like refraction adapts the space of the ocean by "showing" the viewer it in sound. Before the opening shot of the film ensues, he lets the audience listen to the sound ocean before it fades into the English version of the Jacques Brel/Gerard Jouannest song, *Sons Of* (sung by Laurika Rauch). In doing this, he cements the elemental importance of water and the space that it occupies. The viewer then observes Timus running along a beach after he's been assaulted – he is crying hysterically. He has a large body of water - the ocean – next to him. The state that he is in is positioned next to the very element that wants the reader and/or viewer to consider his "unmasculine" state (crying, afraid, hysterical) as a perfectly acceptable form of masculinity.

The novel describes a dream sequence that is perhaps the pivotal nexus for *bodies* and *water*. The theme of a pregnant (imminent) danger/change/revolution/truth/healing/reality threatening to bubble up and over the surface is one that is established from the very beginning of the novel. When some of these elements finally do erupt during the dream sequence with the burst pipe in the street, it functions as a strange conciliatory, healing and in the novel, a sexual force, that deeply affects the neighbourhood. As mentioned before: Timus' cast(s) comes off his arm(s), the disabled girl's leg brace gets taken off when she is healed, the neighbourhood takes

off their clothes and dances with each other and mute Aunt Rosie (Petru Wessels) can suddenly speak. The dream sequence is choreographed in the film as a dance that occurs under the showering water of the burst pipe. The sequence is mostly stripped of diegetic sound. In the novel Van Tonder has the scene end in an orgy. Eilers' scene is far more conservative and the coming together of the neighbourhood is purely platonic and for a moment "cleansing". In this particular sequence Timus is stripped of his role as focaliser – the viewer is able to regard him and his environment without it being mediated through him. But this is only temporary. Timus' focalisation plays a very important role in both texts.

Timus' agency as focaliser to mediate the refractions.

The first person narrative is a particular part of the fabric of the novel that is interpreted in the film rather predictably through voice over. The voice over unfortunately sounds rehearsed and as if it is being read off a page. Jessica Scarlata writes about Patrick McCabe's 1992 novel, *The Butcher Boy* in Robert Stam's *Literature and Film* (2005, p. 233). Neil Jordan adapted the Irish novel into a film of the same name in 1997. Jordan includes a heavy use of voice over in his film but he employs it in a much smarter way than what Eilers did. The functions of the first person narratives in the novels are different – in *The Butcher Boy* it is directly intended to establish significant dissonance between what Francie, the protagonist, says and does. Francie's fantasy world is very far removed from the reality that he finds himself in in the 1960s Ireland. I am therefore not suggesting that Eilers could have employed the same voice-over strategies, merely that he might have considered a more creative way to use his own strategies. To add to the effect of deep discordance between Francie on screen and Francie's voice-over, Jordan cast the adult-Francie (played by Stephen Rea) to do the voice-over of young Francie, played by Eamonn Owens. The disjointedness of the man's voice, the child on screen and the events in the film against the fantasy stories that is being heard over it, results in the intended "carnival" of the

film of which I will say more about later. In this way the story is kept deeply personal – this is exclusively *Francie's story*.

The much more interesting strategy that Eilers employs in *Roepman* to convey Timus' first person narrative is the point of view (pov) shots. There are some pov shots in the opening sequence for instance, which are not Timus' but which echo the trend of Timus' insistent and unrelenting eavesdropping. The shots are masked as if a person is watching with an object that they can hide behind. The viewer often sees Timus under windows, in trees or behind something listening in and watching. This underlines how the character's life is mediated through others' stories, particularly through those of his sisters', and the pov shots let us essentially peep through keyholes or around corners with Timus. There is no question that the reader and/or viewer is strongly encouraged to identify with the boy.

Conclusion.

Jessica Scarlata is particularly interested in Mikhail Bakhtin's *carnivalesque* in this film. Jordan makes very interesting choices to explore the politics and psychology of postcolonial Ireland. One such choice that was particularly controversial, and wholly *punk*, was to cast Sinéad O'Connor as the Irish Catholic Holy Mother in Francie's hallucination. But I want to draw specific focus to an observation that Scarlata makes about Patrick McCabe appearing as a drunken character in the film. Scarlata reads his presence as a *carnivalisation* of his "authority" as the "only creator" (2005, p. 236). Could Paul Eilers' presence as the socially impotent pastor in *Roepman* be read as the "impotent" creator with only a removable "cloak" of authority as the director of the film?

In a series of very interesting choices in adaptation the film language in *Roepman* weaves together Timus' narrative. The most important achievement of the film is arguably the

exploration it launches into alternative Afrikaner masculinities. The adaptation operates within Kamilla Elliott model of the looking glass analogies in that it reflects off of the novel. The film regards two motifs as particularly poignant in challenging representations of more traditional conceptions of masculinities in Afrikaans cinemas. The film showcases an array of bodies and uses different images of water to suggest journeys of change – whether in the physical and psychological make-up of a young boy or more generally in the socio-political make-up and collective psychology of the Afrikaner in South Africa in the 1960s.

CHAPTER THREE.

ADAPTATION AND THE YOUTH NOVEL - A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WRITER–PROTAGONIST IN *HANNA HOEKOM* AND CHALLENGING THE TRADITIONAL AFRIKAANS NUCLEAR FAMILY IN *SKILPOPPE.*

"Dear reader, I want to invent a life for myself. The life of another almost fifteen-year-old with an exotic name like Fabienne. She is me, but also not me."

Hanna Why in *The Hidden Life of Hanna Why*, Marita van der Vyver, 2007 (originally published in 2002), p. 10.

Introduction to the youth novel, *Die Ongelooflike Avonture van Hanna Hoekom*.

In 2002 Marita van der Vyver publishes her fourth youth novel[51] after having written three novels for adults in the 1990's. *Die Ongelooflike Avonture van Hanna Hoekom* (translated into English as *The Hidden Life of Hanna Why*, or *Hanna*, here after) travels with a young woman of 14 (turning 15) and her complicated – in relation and in person – family on her mother's honeymoon that she never had with her husband. This takes place on the isolated and fictional space of Botterberg – a hilly, hidden area in a small and very plain holiday home. The family is an interesting conglomerate: Hanna's mother had her with her homosexual flatmate at the time, Gavin. He joins the family on their honeymoon vacation. Hanna has a brother, Tibo, who was "made in a tube in the UK" after Hanna's mother, Mana, sworn off all men (Van der Vyver, 2002, p. 6). Mana met Beyers, a divorced actor, years later and married him. Beyers has two boys, Yann who is only a couple of years older than Hanna and Amos who is roughly the same age as

[51] In the introduction of the novel youth literature is described to be van der Vyver's "first love" (author unknown, Tafelberg, 2002). Her first three youth novels were *Van jou jas* (1982), *Tien vir 'n vriend* (1987) and *Eenkantkind* (1991).

Hanna's real brother, Tibo. Yann and Amos' mother lives in America where she is something of a failed actress. Margot also makes an appearance at Botterberg where everybody is staying. Mana is very pregnant going up the mountain with her and Beyers' first child together.

Hanna wants to be a writer. While at home and then on Botterberg, she is vehemently trying to find the right *medium* and *story* to tell. The main theme for her stories is to make up a new life for herself. Her alter ego-character is called Fabienne who possesses the best things about Hanna's life and who is ultimately an idealised version of her. "Die lewe van 'n amper vyftienjarige meisie met 'n eksotiese naam soos Fabienne. Sy's ek, maar sy's ook nie ek nie. My *alter ego*…" (Van der Vyver, 2002, p. 4, *original emphasis*). Hanna describes herself as mediocre at best. Her distinguishing feature is, according to her, her imagination (Van der Vyver, 2002, p. 5). The stories that she imagines come in different forms i.e. a short story, a poem, a play, outlines of novels and a news story. She also experiments with genres like horror stories, detective stories, tragedy and of course, her being 15, romance stories. They are inevitably fantasies of herself, her own life and her family romanticised, exported to the exotic or estranged or a combination of all three.

The narrative is told in the first person and Hanna's confined spaces – her room, the cramped car with her big family, the small house on Botterberg – echo the claustrophobic space of Hanna's *mind* that the reader has to share with the narrator. The fluidity of what actually happens on Botterberg and how Hanna incorporates it into her imagination is striking. She leaps into her imagination just as suddenly as she snaps out of it. It is also important to note Hanna's very own authorisation of her fantasy stories. She is in full control of them and she often uses wordplay (especially in the titles of the stories) to entertain herself, and to stretch her vocabulary muscles.

Introduction to the film, *Die Ongelooflike Avonture van Hanna Hoekom*.

In 2010 director Regardt van den Bergh adapts Van der Vyver's novel into a feature film. He casts a diverse mix of experienced and less experienced actors. He uses voice-over, animation and dark, melodramatic dramatisations of Hanna's stories to let the viewer share in her fantasies. The film was so popular that Tafelberg publishers published a second print of *Hanna* afterwards. This edition has film-Hanna, played by Anneke Weideman, on the cover with the motif of her hair that floods the page like ink. Weideman delivers a performance that it simultaneously naïve and delicate but also mature and deeply proficient and intuitive in her interpretation of the character.

The film certainly has its problems: it is clearly made for "family viewing" and its naivety is most pronounced in the farcical arrival and stay of Margot (Helene Lombard) who is Yann and Amos' actress mother from America. It seems as if Weideman with her skill set of subtle, nuanced performance is ready to take the character of Hanna to a place where a much more intimate representation is possible, but is stifled in van den Bergh's direction which gives priority to narrative progression. Weideman has brilliant support from Anna-Mart van der Merwe and Gys de Villiers but is also let down by Crystal-Donna Roberts who plays the latté-skinned, witty and mysterious Sharon, Hanna's best friend, with bluntness usually found at school recitals.

The special relationship between adaptation and writer-characters in cinema.

Paul Arthur writes in his chapter in Stam and Raengo's compilation of essays on adaptation that stories about writers often highlight the tensions between the writer's imagined worlds with its interiority and the "particular 'external' circumstances that feed, inhibit or otherwise inform the writing process[es]" (Arthur in Stam & Raengo, 2005, p. 332). Arthur argues that the presence of

a voice-over from the writer-protagonist frames the process of writing as a "literary work-in-progress" (ibid.).

Hanna Hoekom, the first person-narrator, starts Van der Vyver's novel by addressing the reader directly: "Dear reader." Attention is therefore immediately drawn to her *process* and the fact that she is a writer. Then the focus of her descriptions of her interiority is foregrounded by conveying her desire to *write*, and what she *wants* to write, to the reader. We get to explore Hanna's interior space even further when she tells the reader about the stories that are forming in her mind.

Her first story has no particular style or medium. She calls it: *Bloeiende Tandvleis* (*Bleeding Gums*). The title of her story refers to her stepfather Beyers' TV programme that he starred in when he was younger. Hanna cannot recall what the correct title of the show was – she guesses *Vergete Bloeisels* or *Bloeisels van Vergetelheid,* which is a little bit pretentious and nonsensical respectively (2002, p. 4). Beyers, played by veteran South African actor Gys du Plessis, calls his old show *Bloeiende Vergeetagtigheid* (*Bleeding Forgetfulness*) in a mocking way. Hanna states that as an actor he much preferred theatre work and she adds that currently he is a radio- and TV presenter, a reader at arts festivals etc. (ibid.). This short moment that Van der Vyver spends on establishing Beyers' character also comments on the movement of stories within the larger narrative between form and genre. The very early mention of Beyers' television-, theatre-, radio work and performance art predicts the different ways that stories will operate in this narrative.

Bloeiende Tandvleis, Hanna's first flight of imagination, is a dark family tragedy. Hanna's alter ego, Fabienne loses her dentist father on her 15th birthday. Her mother accidentally gives him an electric shock. As part of her grief Fabienne's mother pulls all of her own teeth and has them

buried with her husband. Later she starts to get jealous of her daughters' beautiful teeth and one night she drugs Fabienne's sister with laughing gas and pulls all her teeth while the girl is giggling away. The adaptation of this story in the film is quite remarkable. The scene starts with a cut away from Hanna where she was writing her story and had a short tiff with her little brother. The camera pans down and we see that Hanna is still writing and the voice-over from the end of the previous scene continues. The colour grading has changed drastically from the warm morning light of the previous shot. It is much bluer and darker. Animated onto the shot is something like ink that is projected into water. This fluid, running ink literally frames the scene of Hanna's story that is playing out as she is writing. The liquidity of the scene is not only established from the supposed ink that spills from Hanna's page into her fantasy but also from the way the camera moves around Hanna's head to enhance the dream-like, swirling texture of the sequence. The film language in the scene resonates with the instability and incompleteness of Hanna's stories. There is no clear beginning or end to any of them. They seem to flow into each other like the animated ink that references her fantasies.

Hanna's casting of the actors for her characters in her stories present interesting choices – both from Hanna and from the filmmaker, Van den Bergh. Hanna casts her real parents, Mana and Beyers, in the parental roles in her stories. She plays Fabienne, her alter ego, and she casts her very pretty friend, Sharon in the roles of her imagined older sisters or other girls that figure in her stories. Van den Bergh then makes the creative choice in the film to cast the same actors in Hanna's fantasies that he re-enacts. This leads to a dynamic in the narrative that can be linked to Elliott's genetic concept of adaptation. What happens in the film with the actors playing out Hanna's stories is deeply embedded in the novel already. For example Fabienne's mother or the witch in her story often resemble Hanna's mother. Van der Vyver uses the indicator of the paintbrushes in a woman's bushy hair most often. This "genetic material" of the novel does not

need any manifestation but Regardt van den Bergh recognises the opportunity for film to cast these characters in the fantasies – to give them some specific people's faces and bodies. This creative strategy is a wonderful example of how mediums are alive in one another. I also want to link this to Elliott's looking glass analogy in how Hanna's fantasies reflect off one another between the novel and the film.

As have been stated above, Hanna's role as the writer is firmly established in both the novel and the film very early on. Her position as The Author is however complicated, if not compromised, in at least two ways during the manifestations of the fantasy sequences in the film. Firstly, the mere event of the stories playing out right next to her suggests that they've taken on a life of their own – they have become artificially intelligent. The film cuts to moments in the fantasy where Hanna is entirely absent and the fantasy is in full screen.[52] Secondly, in the sequence where *Bloeiende Tandvleis* is playing out, there is a moment where Hanna turns her head and regards her own fantasy, which blurs the line between her as the *author* and her as the story-*teller*. Hanna as the writer-protagonist in the film subtly questions the role of the author through film language and film aesthetics.

As last note on this first fantasy sequence is that the images, sound and words of the re-enacted fantasy explores Stam's notion of chronological anteriority of art forms. It is unclear in this sequence if it is the images in Hanna's mind that is spilled onto her page as words or if it is her voice-over[53] (words) that produces the images in her fantasy. It is therefore impossible to determine which form Hanna's fantasy takes first. This determination would also be undesirable. The technique that Van den Bergh uses in this sequence i.e. the voice-over (words and sound)

[52] One example of where the fantasy in *Bloeiende Tandvleis* cuts so full-screen shots is when the mother becomes aware of her daughters' beautiful teeth and grows envious.
[53] The voice-over in the film might translate as the first person narration in the novel.

that transfers into Hanna's pen and book (images of words) that transfer into the ink that spills of the page and generates the concert of the fantasy (images, sound and words) renders arguments of anteriority or seniority redundant. The more interesting exploration lies in the *collaborative value* of the words, images and sound.

The animation in this film is significant and rather spectacular to watch. It has gothic and almost pantomimic qualities. The re-enactments of the stories are theatrical and it takes place in very confined, artificially lit spaces. The characters wear over-the-top wigs and make-up and the sequences are soaked in melodrama. It serves as a stark contrast against the very natural scenes at Hanna's home and on the house on Botterberg. Leon van Nierop notes how one of the first examples of animation used in a non-animated Afrikaans feature film is in *Dr Kalie*, directed by Ivan Hall in 1968 (Van Nierop in *Daar Doer In die Fliek*, 2011). In this film Hall uses animation to weave Kalie's three stories together in an imaginative way (ibid.). The film opens in the same year as Jans Rautenbach's benchmark *Die Kandidaat* (1968) in which the director, together with director of photography, Koos Roets, truly uses the camera as one of the narrators of the story. *Dr Kalie*, according to Van Nierop, also employs the camera with new techniques (of which the animation is one) participates in the dramatic action of the film, rather than just observe it. 1968 is therefore a very important year for Afrikaans films signalling a significant junction in the Afrikaans film industry.

In Hanna's second story the demented, witch-like mother develops into an even darker character. The tale firmly establishes the tension Hanna is experiencing between her and Mana, where it was perhaps only hinted at before. The mother starts out as something counter to what Hanna thinks of her mother in real life – she seems fairly "normal" and somewhat glamorous. She is a horticulturalist with particularly green fingers, which connotes Hanna's need for

nurturing from Mana, her mother, quite strongly. Anna-Mart van der Merwe, perhaps the most famous face of South African film and, television and theatre plays the artistic Mana in the film. The real Mana is by no means an uncaring mother, she is however very different from other (probably) Afrikaans mothers. Hanna detests the paintbrushes that are always sticking out of her hair – even when she is not painting. In this second fantasy Hanna has a fictional older sister who makes delicious chocolate mousse and her father is a respected dentist. Fabienne takes on some of the qualities of Hanna's real mother, Mana. She is a brilliant painter and sketch artist even from a very young age. Hanna does however make it clear that Fabienne does not possess any of the "messy personality" traits (like her own mother). Hanna's relationship with Mana is tense on two levels: she intensely dislikes how her mother is but there are hints in her fantasies that she might secretly admire (and perhaps desire) some of her mother's qualities.

In the story Fabienne has a strange dream one night that her parents are not her real parents. That night at dinner her classy older sister's chocolate mousse tastes like mud and she loses her otherwise healthy appetite. In Fabienne's nightmares a witch-like woman urges her to murder her entire family. In the novel this woman is described so that she resembles Hanna's real mother, Mana.

"At night, in Fabienne's sleep, the paintbrush woman returned to taunt her with wild hair and garish dresses, scarves and jerseys. Citrus orange and jacaranda purple and cornflower blue, can you imagine? Colours that Fabienne's mother would not be seen dead in. Not even singly. And this woman mixed all these colours with total abandon" (Van der Vyver, 2007, p. 28).

The novel suggests that the witch dresses like Mana and the film (and Hanna) casts Mana as the witch in Hanna's mental film clip. Paintbrushes stick out of Mana's hair and baggy cloths hangs

off of her. The alienation, embarrassment and dissonance that Hanna experiences in her relationship with her mother is no longer implied but can be *inferred*. The viewer is literally able to see *inside* Hanna's mind. Hanna labels this story a "psychological thriller" (Van der Vyver, 2002, p. 24). She doesn't commit to a title for the story but suggests *Bloedige Stillewe* (*Bloody Still Life*) or *Vervloekte Verfkwas* (*Cursed Paintbrush*[54]) (ibid.).

Hanna's third story takes the shape of a detective novel (2002, p. 36). She calls it *Stillewe* (*Still Life*). This title, again, reinforces the strong interart theme that is weaved through the larger narrative. In this story the idea of the *death of the family* is expanded. Hanna feels that it is necessary to lose, kill off or make her father disappear. In the story he has to extract a minister's teeth that he seemingly already pulled before. Fabienne tugs at the conspiracy but Hanna leaves the story open-ended. At the end of the chapter in the novel and of Hanna's story, she addresses the reader directly again: "Dear reader, what would you have believed if you were Fabienne? More importantly: What would you have *done*?" (Van der Vyver, 2007, p. 47, *original emphasis*).

In chapter five of the novel Hanna writes a poem (2002, p. 47). The poem itself is an adaptation of *Dis Al* by Jan F.E. Celliers that Hanna adapts from the canonical compilation of Afrikaans poetry, *Die Groot Verseboek.* Hanna compares herself to Sylvia Plath[55] saying that she is nowhere as good but she comforts herself about her humble poem by thinking that Plath also had to start somewhere (2007, p. 51). Hanna's poem reads:

[54] These translations of the titles of Hanna Hoekom's stories are very literal and contrived. It does not capture playfulness of the alliteration and other sound and rhythm language devices that Van der Vyver employs in her youth novel.
[55] In the original Afrikaans version Hanna compares herself to well known Afrikaans poet Antjie Krog.

"It's the floor,

it's the wall,

it's the darkest hour.

That's all.

It's the pen in my hand,

the page empty as sand

I hear a poem call.

That's all.

Hanna Why. Winter 2002. Bitterberg." (Van der Vyver, 2007, p. 51)

Hanna's attempt at poetry fails miserably. Her poem is slaughtered by her family. Her two younger brothers sneak into her room, read it and then make fun of it as the family is having lunch together. The boys make up their own rhymes using Hanna's poem's structure and rhyming scheme and taunt her with it (2007, p. 52).

"'It's the food on my fork,' snickered Amos.

'I look like a dork,' giggled Tibo.

'That's all!' they shouted together, nearly falling into their plates with glee" (Van der Vyver, 2007, 52).

The game of making fun of Hanna's poem soon becomes a type of language in the family as a joke. They start communicating in those specific rhyme schemes while playing poker and Hanna joins in. Hanna's *written* poetry journeys across mediums because now it has become a *performed* and *improvised* poetry. Her rhyme scheme, or indeed that of Jan F.E. Celliers, and some of her words ("dis al") is retained and the rest is discarded to shape into its new contexts.

This new word game that the family plays is a definite development in Hanna's acceptance and embracing of her family.

This does not only comment on the imperfect and transitory nature of writing styles or genres, or indeed *mediums*, but also on the Artist. Hanna as the Writer is reduced and her art is turned into parody around the lunch table. Her brothers' mocking rhymes level her with them. They equal the playing field by proving that she is no better, or more worthy a writer than they are. The fine commentary on old interart wars is significant: poetry (like all other art) can be pretentious and stale. No medium or form is above another.

Hanna's fifth fantasy[56] involves a love story. It is murderous as her jealousy flares up over her friend Sharon (Crystal-Donna Roberts) who has a much better relationship with her older stepbrother, Yann (Dawid van den Bergh), than she does. But in this story a strange change of character takes place. Sharon, Hanna's pretty friend, plays the role of Fabienne. A new character named Anna plays the role of the "…plain old Hanna Hoekom type friend…" (Van der Vyver, 2002, p. 114). Fabienne and Anna both fall in love with Jan, a character who starkly resembles Hanna's older stepbrother, Yann. Fabienne and Jan enter into a vacation romance but Jan starts paying more attention to Anna after she saves his life on the beach one day. After doubting her own ability to write a love story because of her lack of experience in such matters, she decides to trust her imagination.

[56] I've omitted the fourth of Hanna's stories which is a play. It takes the shape of an old-fashioned murder mystery and it is very brief. I chose to focus on Hanna's fifth story which is much more elaborate. It is however important to note the *change of medium again*: this time in the form of theatre.

"A little voice in my head disagreed, however. Writers don't have to experience everything. For example, a writer does not have to die in order to write about death. Thank goodness. Writers have imagination, after all!" (Van der Vyver, 2007, p. 115).

Anna grows up to be a beautiful and successful writer. In the story Jan marries Fabienne but is in love with Anna. This is the only narrative that Hanna "completes". It ends tragically and Jan and Anna are never able to be together (2002, p. 128). There are two significant and sensitive events in this narrative. The first is Hanna compromising the utopian version of herself. With this narrative that borders on melodrama, Hanna is able to remove Fabienne from herself. She "gives" Fabienne to her friend, Sharon. She emancipates herself from a perhaps oppressive and prescriptive alter ego – an unachievable (and fictitious!) persona. She has to initially make this shift in her diegetic world before she can claim it for herself in her "real" world. It is only in this last fictional[57] story that Hanna can sketch a plain character and have her be the "hero" (albeit a tragic one).

Paul Arthur echoes aspects of Kamilla Elliott's looking glass analogies in terms of adaptation when he labels films with writer-protagonists as having a "decidedly reflexive dimension" in the "cozy alliance between the prerogatives of filmic and literary storytelling" (*in* Stam, 2005, p. 334, *my emphasis*). I would argue that in *Hanna* the film, this spectrum of refractions or reflections is expanded. Watching the film, we engage with a filmic character who still "talks" to her imaginary "literary audience", or her "readers" while we, the viewers, are her "real" audience. Film viewers are in effect standing in for her literary audience. Elliott's notion of mirrors reflecting in more mirrors (the looking glass) is particularly apt for the exploration of audiences and the dynamic between readers and viewers – also because they are so often the same people. A text with a

[57] Fiction as fiction – after this love story she "writes" (or imagines) a fictional news report.

writer-protagonist complicates our ability to determine who the different, resembling audiences are.

Arhtur's final comments on the writer-protagonist pertains to her "particular external circumstances" that will inform her writing process are also emphasised early on (in Stam, 2005, p. 232). Just as Hanna starts to address the reader her younger brother Tibo interrupts her. He looks over her shoulder at what she is writing and criticises the way she starts her story. Hanna uses this interaction as an opportunity for exposition of her family set-up. This is quite apt because the bulk of Hanna's external circumstances, the ones that might be troubling her the most, and the ones she is most often presented with, are her family (in a broad sense of the word). The foregrounding of Hanna's writing process persists throughout the entire novel and film in this way. Hanna explores her most challenging relationships with family members and friends – her external circumstances – through her very private stories. It is important to note the progression or passage (and movement/fluidity) between styles and genres that Hanna chooses to work in. Her external circumstances urge her move between stories, genres and forms without writing definitive endings or wrapping up her content in neat packages. She carelessly abandons her horror story because she doesn't want Fabienne, her alter ego, to die. She traffics her detective novel for a poem and as a blasé aside, she transposes the name of the crime story to the poem in "memory of it" (2002, p. 47). These narratives stay open-ended and abandoned for the next best thing – a trend that plays an important role in the reading of the literary and filmic texts and how these feed into each other. Arthur argues that "the dispersal of narrational authority acts to foreground, as it destabilizes, the narrator/protagonist's struggle for control. Rather than getting lost, the narrator's function is made pivotal through the articulation

of limits and blindspots." (*in* Stam, 2005, p. 336, *my emphasis*)[58] I would argue that Hanna shares her "narrational authority" with her stories and characters. It is these which guide her to her "developed" mind-set at the end of the novel.

Frustrating the conventions of the Afrikaans nuclear family.

Hanna has complicated feelings for her older stepbrother. She openly casts herself and Yann as the star-crossed lovers in her love story and she describes a couple of physical interactions between their characters. This element of Hanna's journey opens up the next set of enquiry: what do both *Hanna Hoekoms*' treatments of the traditional Afrikaans nuclear family look like? The *Hanna* texts explore an alternative Afrikaans family structure. It would seem that all of Hanna's familial and extra-familial relationships are complex and very much part of her journey of teasing out her own identity. Taking her relationship with her older stepbrother, Yann, as a starting point, we can unpack some of the novel's and the adaptation's treatments of this family.

Hanna's feelings towards Yann seem ambiguous throughout both texts. It is my reading of these characters that although Hanna and Yann are not directly related; the incestuous implication of her desire does not help to make her feel any more comfortable around Yann. She projects some of her insecurities about her body onto him –

"[His mother] has an unbelievable body, according to Yann. Boobs like balloons. No wonder he looks at my mosquito bites with such disdain" (Van der Vyver, 2007, p. 12).

[58] Arthur makes this point to counter David Bordwell's argument that "personified narrators are inevitably swallowed up in the overall narrational process of the film, which they do *not* produce" (*in* Stam, 2005, p. 336).

But Hanna's feelings for Yann are more complicated than a frivolous teenage romance. She needs him to *estimate* her. She feels inadequate around him and she watches him constantly to describe his mood and mannerisms. When Yann and her friend, Sharon, start flirting with each other, Hanna initially experiences this as a rejection from Yann and a betrayal from Sharon. As discussed earlier, it is only when she lets their characters be together in one of her last stories that she is able to come to terms their relationship being appropriate. This prompts her to re-negotiate her own relationship with Yann. At the end of the novel she still refers to him as her "annoying step brother" and although she is unsure about where he would fit, she tries to make room for him in her new story. These ideas about discovering alternative family structures in adaptation lead into the second primary set of texts and an analysis of its adaptation strategies.

Introduction to the youth novel, *Skilpoppe*.

'Skilpoppe' is an Afrikaans word that Barrie Hough, its author, gives to Russian matryoshka or 'nesting' dolls. 'Skilpoppe' literally translated would be something like 'peel-dolls' or dolls that can be 'peeled'. Hough references different types of dolls in his 1998 youth novel *Skilpoppe* (Tafelberg, Cape Town). The story is set in Afrikaans, 15-year-old Anna's home and at her school in or near Westcliff, Johannesburg circa 1998 (Nel & Steenkamp, p. 23). Her older brother has committed suicide at home a few months prior – at least partly because of a difficult relationship with his father who did not accept his homosexuality or his long-time Chinese-South African partner, Ching-Kung. We meet Anna as she is rehearsing for her part as Juliet in a school production of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Her parents go overseas for some time leaving her older sister in charge of the house. Her sister is a photojournalist and has a bad experience with dead bodies when she goes out on a story. This, together with the recent passing of their brother and the bad influence of her new boyfriend pushes her sister to smoke crack cocaine and become an addict.

Anna explores not only her relationships with her family, friends, enemies, teachers and men, but also her relationship with her own body. The different references to dolls in the narratives shape the theme of "unlayering" something that might seem (pretty but) dead from the outside. The Russian dolls in particular emphasise the relational value between body and psychology – and the slow unravelling of both. Anna unpacks her own psychology as she navigates her way through the preparation for the performance of the character of Juliet. This is how she reaches one of her own "smallest nesting doll" – her most inner self. The principal of nesting dolls relates closely to the psychological theory of mise-en-abyme – or to be placed into "the abyss". This refers to the possibility that there is always a similar-looking, smaller part in the smallest part – to infinity. The unpacking of the dolls could be regarded as a never-ending task. Reaching one's smallest, "truest" self might always be "one more doll away".

Hough asks two principal questions in his novel - how can a family be re-built after a suicide and how does one navigate through a relationship between an Afrikaans homosexual son and an (Afrikaans) unaccepting father. Of course being critical and unaccepting of homosexuality is in no way unique to Afrikaans people, but I would argue that it holds its own brand, as do many other communities all over the world. One could also argue that each complicated relationship between a homosexual man and an unaccepting father is completely unique to their particular set of circumstances. This text is strikingly personal and autobiographical to an extent for Barrie Hough. Hough himself was homosexual and he lost his father when he was five years old. Hough took his own life in August of 2004 (Nel&Steenkamp, p. 10). Nel and Steenkamp write in their study guide on *Skilpoppe* that Hough featured an absent father, or the search for a father figure, in most of his work (Year unknown, p. 8).

Introduction to the film, *Skilpoppe*.

It is not entirely clear whether *Skilpoppe* can be considered to be an Afrikaans film. Lizz Meiring wrote the screenplay in English and adapted Anna, played by Kate Ascott-Evans, to be English-speaking, but fluent in Afrikaans. Anna attends an English-medium school. Meiring interpreted Hough's novel in a bilingual and bi-cultural way. Anna's voice-overs and dialogue with different characters are often in English, but I have chosen this text because of its particularly Afrikaans "nature" and setting. Anna grows up in an Afrikaans home.

Nel and Steenkamp's study guide (date of publishing unknown) for learners is comprehensive and a very interesting and thorough exploration of Hough's text and André Odendaal's film. It does however reinforce old, conservative ideas about adaptation. The first problem is that the film is called a "video" throughout the text. Although this film was produced for television release only, it is demeaned and derided by its "video" status. Secondly, it alludes to comparisons between the two texts at its very earliest opportunity. Comparisons are not problematic in themselves; it is that the bias is weighted towards the chronotext. The film is labelled as "controversial" (which it was when it was shown on television) and questions are posed like: "does the film 'open the novel up'?" and "does the explicit nature of the sex scenes tarnish a "good book"? The authors make one direct statement about the film that summarises their implications from their questions to learners:

"After thorough reflection and discussion of the merit of the *video* vs the book, *one* can conclude that the characteristics of the novel are specific to its genre and can't really be conveyed through another medium"[59] (Nel & Steenkamp, p. 21, *my emphasis*).

[59] This is my own translation from Afrikaans of what Nel & Steenkamp wrote.

This is deeply reminiscent of prejudices that Stam identifies – it implies some sort of obligation of the film towards its chronotext, it holds the chronotext as benchmark of what is to be portrayed by the film and it assumes that film (or any other medium for that matter) should only be telling this story if it could be "true" or "faithful" to the chronotext. The latter has very vague and personal parameters – I would argue that my own ideas of what would be the specific components of "fidelity" in *Skilpoppe* would most probably differ from Nel and Steenkamp. Even these writers might very well not necessarily agree on specifics of ways that the story *should* travel. And again: the larger issue is, as Elliott has poignantly put it, why it would *desirable* at all for the film to be "faithful" or the subjectivity of the filmmakers removed (2003, p. 156).[60]

Like *Hanna Hoekom, Skilpoppe* also poses a direct challenge to the typical Afrikaans nuclear family. Anna's brother is gay, her sister is a drug addict and her best friend is black. The story addresses marginalised communities in a very direct, if somewhat contrived and rushed way. Anna's best friend, Thoko, briefly talks about her experiences in growing up in the township with "…the taxi wars, the gangsters, the rapes" (1998, p. 42, my translation). Thoko tells Anna that her uncle was only fourteen when he was shot and killed during the 1976 Soweto riots. This story briefly upsets Anna while she is in science class, but then her mind swiftly drifts to the love scene between her and the boy who plays Romeo in the play.

Anna's household employs a live-in domestic worker, Florence who cooks and cleans. This character is not present in the film adaptation. The representation of black characters in this story is minimal and it is unclear why Thoko was written into the film at all if their friendship was

[60] Elliott here strictly here questions the notion of why it would be desirable to remove subjectivity. I question the notion of why it would be desirable for a film (or any text) to be "faithful" to its chronotext.

going to be so rushed one dimensional. One can't help to feel that it was a *rainbow-nationed* choice to some extent.

The generic Afrikaans father is present in *Skilpoppe* again. He is middle aged and marked by his distrust of anything foreign. This is embodied primarily through Ching-Kung, played by Kenneth Fok. Sebast (Paul du Toit) is Anna's brother who committed suicide two months prior to the start of Anna's story. Ching-Kung is his Chinese-South African lover and partner. Sebast's father, played by Marius Weyers, has no interest in accepting Ching-Kung. In Ching-Kung lie two of his deepest fears: the foreign and the homosexual. He expresses is distrust of the foreign to his wife right before their trip overseas: "Letting my wife loose amidst a bunch of bloody communists – over my dead body!"…"The only good communist is a dead communist." (1998, p. 9, *my translations*). He is very upset about his wife going to Russia. Ching-Kung's ethnicity might remind him of communist political persuasions – something that he detests. The partial resolve of the rigid, unreasonable father figure is therefore beautiful and apt when it happens through the process of sourcing and collecting *Russian* matryoshka dolls. Acceptance of Ching-Kung also takes place in a somewhat more predictable way in the end when Anna's father and Ching-Kung shares a drink and he talks to Ching-Kung about his koi.

Anna is forced to rethink how her family is structured around her. Her parents are absent, her brother is dead, and her sister and the boyfriend are drug addicts. She finds comfort in her relationship with Ching-Kung and the film includes sequences where she is in close proximity to him – in cars and in their respective houses. The film is aesthetically rather dull and the use of flashbacks is predictable. The sex sequence between Anna's sister and her boyfriend feels highly contrived and gratuitous. Anna's indulgence in her daydreaming, specifically when she imagines

her sister's boyfriend's nudity, is tarnished by the filmmaker trying to make the scene comical where it had all the potential to serve as great exposition into Anna's inner world.
In this case it is not the creative choices in the filmmaking process that makes *Skilpoppe* an appealing text but rather the fact that it was chosen to be adapted. It follows a discernible pattern and seeming tradition of Afrikaans adaptations that have questioned and explored family structures. In this dissertation all five primary texts (*Roepman*, *Hanna Hoekom*, *Skilpoppe*, *Moedertjie* and *Siener*) deal very explicitly with the problematic "pre-determined" notion of what the Afrikaans family is supposed to look like. The texts consider both external and internal expressions of threats to the nuclear structure of the family. It also then goes on to negotiate new possibilities of structure and it would seem like the negation takes place particularly *between* these internal and external components.

As was stated in chapter two the whaling station and the railway in *Roepman* pronounce these conflicts symbolically *first*. Timus' inner space, symbolised by motifs of water, is in dire conflict with that of his physical environment symbolised by the train tracks, the industry of railways in their railway camp and the trains themselves. The negotiation takes form when Timus distances himself from both spheres. He symbolically refuses to urinate "for show" anymore, essentially removing himself from the "water" or his child-like inner world and the family moves away from the railway camp in Durban which establishes Timus' abandonment of his physical environment.

Hanna Hoekom operates in a very similar way. Hanna's deeply interiorised space of her made-up stories (where she makes up a new life for herself) plays itself off against what she perceives as her chaotic family life and an environment that displeases her (their house is not very clean and their dinners are often disappointing). Hanna's negotiation of her family structure is much more optimistic than what can be observed in *Roepman*. Thematically is suggests that Hanna's non-

traditional family structure fits in with the Hanna-character in her stories that is closest to her in real life. The novel has to rebuild the dynamic of this family in an isolated, far-off space and of course the film intensifies the diversity of the different entities in its casting. The characters all look very different and their positioning in the small space of the Botterberg house amplifies Hanna's strained journey towards a new understanding of "family".

Skilpoppe, as mentioned before, starts Anna's rethinking of a family structure by removing what might be considered key elements of a nuclear family. Although her parents are removed from the narrative fairly early on, there is a slower disintegration that takes place with the other relationships. Her sister's drug-use happens more gradually and the film tells a slower story of Sebast, her brother, who kills himself. The viewer sees something of the breakdown of Sebast and Ching-Kung's relationship. These regressive relationships are echoed in the leitmotif of the unpacking of the matryoshka dolls and Anna soon feels that her family has left her to cope on her own prematurely. The re-building of this family is far more contrived than in *Hanna Hoekom* or *Roepman*. One reason for this might be that a sort of reunion is rushed and clumsily resolved. It has the audience believe that Russia fixed Anna's father's racism and xenophobia and his relationship with his wife. But *Skilpoppe* - the youth novel and the film – still leave readers and viewers with some exciting explorations into an "alternative family". *Moedertjie* (1931) and *Siener in die Suburbs* (1973) also follow suit in Afrikaans film adaptations' enquiry into the family and I will discuss these texts in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR.

SPACE AND MELODRAMA IN THE FILMIC ADAPTATION OF AFRIKAANS PLAYS (*MOEDER TJIE* AND *SIENER IN DIE SUBURBS*).

"Every interesting aesthetic tendency now is a species of radicalism. The question each artist must ask is: What is *my* radicalism, the one dictated by *my* gifts and temperament?"

- Susan Sontag in *Theatre and Film: a comparative anthology*, 2005, p. 148.

Introduction to Afrikaans plays and theatre today.

The Afrikaans play is second only to the Afrikaans novel insofar as quantity of texts. Afrikaans theatre thrived under apartheid. Government took very good care of Afrikaans "cultural development". Drama departments at different Afrikaans universities like the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, the University of Pretoria, the Stellenbosch University and provincial arts and culture departments like T.R.U.K. (Transvaalse Raad vir die Uitvoerende Kunste) and KRUIK (Kaapse Raad vir die Uitvoerende Kunste) provided actors, filmmakers, technicians, writers, directors and producers with cutting edge training. Theatres and stages were built all around the country and play companies toured with their productions with great success. The finely honed craft and particular skill to move seamlessly between film, radio, television and the stage is still evident of the top-of-the-line training that many of our veteran actors received back then. Many of these artists were critical of apartheid despite the way that the system benefitted them immensely. This was reflected in numerous productions stretching

across mediums. Some notable socially critical plays were written by the *Sestigers*[61] like André P. Brink, Bartho Smit, Adam Small and Reza de Wet.

Although Afrikaans theatre suffered (perhaps with right) through the 1980's and 1990's when the Struggle finally collapsed the unbalanced structure of government at the time, it experienced some resuscitation with the surge of Afrikaans arts festivals that popped up all over the country towards the end of the 20th century. This is a (hopefully sustainable) trend that started with the hugely successful *Klein Karoo National Arts Festival* (*KKNK*) in Oudtshoorn. There are currently more than 20 Afrikaans festivals in South Africa, Namibia, England and Holland. The five biggest Afrikaans festivals are *KKNK*, *Aardklop* in Potchefstroom, *Innibos* in Nylstroom, *Woordfees* in Stellenbosch and the *Suidoosterfees* in Cape Town[62]. *Woordfees* is arguably the most vigorous in cultivating and preserving a serious theatre audience. The festival places the least emphasis on large beer tents and cheap pop-up stages where almost anyone can go and strum their guitar. It is in these environments where a new Afrikaans theatre is born and honed. An exciting development that has significantly changed the face of Afrikaans theatre is a widely inclusive approach to the *Afrikaans language*. Focus has shifted from the preservation of a heteronormative Afrikaans to a movement of experimentation and identifying different Afrikaans cultures to make art.

In recent years there have been very exciting productions by theatre-makers ranging in levels of experience. Young playwrights like Willem Anker, Saartjie Botha, Tertius Kapp and Nicola Hanekom have written pieces that had ticket buyers in very long queues and sold out school

[61] The *Sestigers* were a group of Afrikaner artists who sought to change the landscape of conservative published Afrikaans writing at the time. The movement also openly opposed the Apartheid regime.
[62] These arts festivals are not exclusively Afrikaans – they do feature some English- and some multi-lingual productions.

halls[63]. Designers, directors, producers and actors have collaborated to make theatre pieces and experiment with form and content – sometimes with standing ovations at the end, and sometimes with people leaving the venue shortly after the play has started, some cursing under their breath. There has also been an expected amount of mediocrity – numerous plays about how all men are really cave men, and then sequels about how all women really *want* to be with cave men; poorly directed farces; poorly performed one-man pieces by familiar TV faces etc.

But the mediocre-to-terrible pieces of theatre are perhaps as important as the great ones. It is from that that audiences can start to discern and shape their tastes. And it is from this that great writers, directors, designers, producers and actors are inspired to do something different. I've been in the theatre of many productions where some members of the audience had walked out. I regard it as a significant accomplishment on the part of all the theatre-makers involved. For it is not the production that is being abandoned, in fact, it is quite the opposite. People leaving the theatre in the middle of a play is evidence that the production has *stirred* and it was, even for a very short moment, and even on a very basic level, *engaged with*. And surely that is what is desirable for theatre's ambit in terms of growth, evolution and sustainability. The revival of Afrikaans theatre bleeds through in the fact that even young theatre-makers can now be considered to be quite experienced: Nicola Hanekom, Jaco Bouwer and Wolf Britz, Nicole Holm, Eben Genis, Stian Bam and Erica Wessels' theatre pieces are almost as sought after as those of veteran masters' like Marthinus Basson, Antoinette Kellerman, Marius Weyers and Sandra Prinsloo. And of course when these generations of artists collaborate, magic is imminent.

[63] Some examples of productions of these playwrights include *Skrapnel* (Willem Anker, 2011), *Slaghuis* (Willem Anker, 2006), *Sielsiek* (Tertius Kapp and Willem Anker, 2006), *Saad* (Saartjie Botha, 2008), *Hol* (2011), *Lot* (2012), *Betésda* (2012) and *Babbel* (2012) by Nicola Hanekom.

It is evident that very interesting things are happening in Afrikaans theatre, but very few Afrikaans plays have however been adapted for Afrikaans film. According to my survey (tabled at the end of the introduction of this dissertation), it seems that not many more than a handful of stories in Afrikaans plays have travelled to Afrikaans film. Some of these are J.F.W. Grosskopf's *In die Wagkamer* that was made into *Moedertjie* by Joseph Albrecht in 1931; *My Broer se Bril* by Dirk de Villiers in 1969 that he made into a film himself in 1972; *Siener in die Suburbs* by P.G. du Plessis in 1971 and made into a film by Francois Swart in 1973. Swart also directed the first performances of the play in 1971. Johan Blignaut et al wrote a play, *Mamza*, which he also made a film from in 1985. Pieter Fourie's play, *Faan se Trein*, was first performed in 1975 and made into a film by Koos Roets It was released in January 2014. No contemporary Afrikaans plays have been adapted for Afrikaans film. This does not *need* to happen in order for either of these media's survival. But the adaptation of plays into film would simply make for very interesting cinema – doubly so if films are interpreted for stage productions. The opportunities for stories are endless, and the opportunity for stories refracted, re-contextualised, re-shaped or re-told, is inexhaustible.

The play and the film.

Before I launch into an exploration of adaptation strategies for my chosen texts, I'd like to unpack an interesting tendency and tension between the play and the film. Susan Sontag notes how Georges Méliès was perhaps the first director to perceive the rectangle of the movie screen analogously with the "proscenium stage" (2005, p. 136). For my Honours thesis I have written about the space on- and off stage and its conversation with on- and off-screen space in cinema (du Plooy, 2011, p. 4). Stage borders, consisting of the parameters of the proscenium arch, primarily function to "…frame[s] the stage and the action that is happening on it. …the borders

function to make the audience aware of what is *not* happening outside of it..." (ibid.). The world of the play is de-emphasised for the theatre audience by the lines of the bare stage.[64]

Cinema, with some notable exceptions, seems works the other way around. The physical borders of the screen are often meant to let the audience imagine "limitless offscreen space" (Geraghty, 2008, p. 76, *my emphasis*). The rectangular lines of the screen operate with the images inside the frame to construct an imagined world of the film. Film as a medium is particularly well equipped to help us imagine this world: the images onscreen can change to show us the characters' space with what might seem entirely effortless to a film audience. (Of course we know that the construction of that film or story world can vary from difficult to extremely difficult and technical for filmmakers.) These very different ideas that film and the theatre employ around its usage of space provides us with a framework within which to survey how stories travel between the two. Geraghty confirms the importance of the "organisation of space" that Bazin emphasises in his argument about transposing a text between to dramaturgical systems i.e. theatre and film in this case (2008, p. 75). She maintains that that the "text" or the "dramatic reality" should respect the "…dramaturgical system that it was written for" (Geraghty, 2008, p. 76).

In this chapter I would like to explore adaptation strategies from two films that have been made from Afrikaans plays. They are *Moedertjie* (1931) and *Siener in die Suburbs* (referred to as *Siener* hereafter) (1973). *Moedertjie* was adapted from a play, *In die Wagkamer*, and *Siener* the film shares the play's title. Both these film texts make for interesting case studies with regards to space. I will argue that both these texts have understood their respective dramaturgical systems as plays and the stories then travelled film without the obligation to stay "faithful" to the

[64] "The borders of the theatre, in [epic theatre and experimental theatre], are intentionally and self-consciously transcended. The forms do not pretend that the borders of the stage do not exist. They admit it by acknowledging that there are borders that they will cross" (du Plooy, 2011, p. 4, footnote).

systems. They do however acknowledge the specificity of the spaces of their chronotexts. Although I do not contend that the filmmakers had any obligation to the chronotext, either to stay "close" to the playwrights' ideas, or to consciously and actively "break away" from it, contradict it, subvert or criticise it[65], it would appear that both these adaptations regarded the matter of space as one that belongs to the dramaturgical system of the play, and have treated it as such.

(Volks-)Moedertjie in the waiting room.

In die Wagkamer is a one-act play set in a waiting room on a small train station in Maraisburg on the Witwatersrand in 1914. A very modest, poor Afrikaans *Tante* (Aunt) and *Oom* (Uncle) have travelled with the train from the Lydenburg-district where they have a farm. They have to look for their son, Hendrik, who left the farm a long time ago to pursue his career as a policeman in "the big town". Oom and Tante have lost six children during the Boer War, mining accidents and childbirth respectively and they are desperate to locate their last living son, Hennie (Hendrik). It's been two years since his last letter.

Arriving soon after midnight the old couple negotiate their way through their angst about their lost son and their own desolation – they are far from home and they have no idea where or how to start their search. Here they meet *Meisie* (Young Woman) who is also from a farm and has 'lost her way' in the big *dorp*. They find out that she was engaged to their son, Hennie, but the relationship ended when he "went bad" (Grosskopf, 1926, p. 8). A constable arrives with a man he has arrested for stabbing a Syrian in "a dirty little street" (Grosskopf, 1926, p. 19). The arrestee is Hendrik Koester (Hennie). It is implied that he spent time in jail after a shady deal to

[65] Keith Cohen contends that an adaptation has an obligation to actively criticise, subvert or even undermine its chronotext (Cohen in Elliott, 2003, p. 175). Kamilla Elliott integrates this in her *trumping concept* of adaptation as is elaborated on in chapter one on adaptation.

make money during his time on the police force. Hennie is briefly reunited with his family and his love from long ago. When he asks for his cuffs to be taken off to say good-bye to his mother, he seizes the opportunity to escape. He jumps in front of a train and kills himself. Hennie leaves his parents behind to go home without ever having left the station. Meisie cries tragically into Tante's lap and asks to go home with them – and if they would accept her as their daughter. In a very beautiful and unusual ending Grosskopf does not provide any resolution, hope, significant character development or escape from the liminal space of the waiting room on the station.

Literature about the play and the film is limited. Maingard wrote about the film in her *South African National Cinema* (2007). But her concerns with the film are socio-political. She writes how the character of the black housekeeper, Miena (actor uncredited), is one that does not feature in Grosskopf's play. The woman is also only shot from behind and a mere prop for Moedertjie to play off of (Maingard, 2007, p. 50). The same applies to another black character, who does not feature in the play: he drives the cart which transports Moedertjie and her husband to the station. Maingard makes a very valid point about the total misrepresentation and racist ignorance of the role of Blacks in South African cinema that this scene is evident of. But she neglects an important aspect of the representation of these characters: they are shown in the film primarily as part of establishing shots and dialogue. They are also shown as very close the way many Blacks were treated in real situations and households of that time. Black people who worked in white Afrikaans households were "faceless" in many ways. They were entirely marginalised as workers. They were often used in early films only as props and extras. I am certain that Albrecht's intent was not to make clever social commentary on the state of South African workers and the oppression of Blacks in those short establishing shots in *Moedertjie*. He was deeply conservative and made *They Built a Nation – Die Bou van 'n Nasie* with Schlesinger a

few years after.[66] What is however brilliant about Albrecht's short sequence is exactly how reflective the film language is of the status quo regarding the treatment and general consideration of Blacks were at that time. Albrecht had shot the black characters, probably entirely subconsciously, very accurately in terms of their roles and "facelessness" in 1931 South Africa.

The limited literature on *In die Wagkamer* and *Moedertjie* is unfortunate especially in light of the fact that, together with *My Sarie Marais*, *Moedertjie* was the first South African - and therefore also Afrikaans - sound film ("talkie") in the history of cinema. It is also the first film to have had Afrikaans dialogue - *My Sarie Marais* only had Afrikaans music (Pople, 2011). *Moedertjie* was shown at the Empire Palace for the first time. A man who would later become a very influential and important figure in Afrikaans cinema, Pierre de Wet, portrays the role of Hendrik, the son, in *Moedertjie*. Leon van Nierop calls him the father of Afrikaans cinema in his interview with Laetitia Pople in 2011. According to a *Beeld* article in 1990, de Wet was appointed as the very first professional producer (and film director) of Afrikaans films in South Africa (Britz, 1990). He was also the first to be awarded a prize in Afrikaans film for his performance from the then-Academy of Language, Literature and Art (Britz, 1990).

Botha writes how strong the influence of theatre was on early South African cinema (2011, p. 43). "…[A]cting pioneers…for example, André Huguenet, Wena Naudé, Gert van den Bergh, Siegfried Mynhardt, Anna Cloete and Patrick Mynhardt…" were stage actors first (Botha, 2011, p. 43). Botha uses *Hans die Skipper* (d/Bladon Peake, 1953) as an example of the deeply theatrical style of acting of the time (ibid.). It is important to note the impact that the stage had on cinema especially in terms of the overlap of theatre- and filmmakers.

[66] *They Built a Nation – Die Bou van 'n Nasie* is mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation.

Stephanie Faure portrayed the role of Tante or the *moedertjie* ("mother-dearest") in *Moedertjie*. She was one of the driving forces behind getting *Moedertjie* made (*South African History Online*, 2013). It is rather significant how she is given a type of co-director's credit in the opening sequences – she might very well be one of the first (and unfortunately only part of a very small handful of) female Afrikaans feature film[67] directors. She studied elocution under some influential names and taught it to different people from actors to preachers. Her emphasis on pronunciation is wonderfully melodramatic in the film and it alludes to the cultural depression of the time - it was just over a decade after the end of the (second) Anglo-Boer War where thousands of South Africans had lost their farms and/or their homes were burnt down. People were extremely poor. Grosskopf's play also makes reference to severe droughts (1926, p. 20). Faure's vocal performance could easily be described as over-the-top or even whiny and pretentious. The dialogue comes across as highly rehearsed and the film is exceptionally stylised. A moviegoer on a Ster Kinekor box office cinema-diet might describe it as highly "theatrical" and "unrealistic" (in the most negative sense of the word).

Botha and van Aswegen emphasise an interesting phenomenon in the Afrikaans film industry in their work about an alternative industry revival in *Beelde van Suid-Afrika: 'n alternatiewe rolprentoplewing* (1992). In the early years of the Afrikaans film industry the general ambit was to elevate the Afrikaner and her language. Botha also writes that the "…Afrikaans audience for this local cinema was relatively large and very stable, guaranteeing nearly every Afrikaans-language film a long enough run to break even as long as it provided light entertainment, basically escapism, and dealt with Afrikaner reality and beliefs in an idealist way" (2012, p. 43). It was meant to re-establish and affirm cultural identities after the "difficult depression years"

[67] *Moedertjie* is only 30 minutes long and therefore not feature length – but it was considered a full length film in 1931, when films were generally a lot shorter than today's standard 90 minute running time.

(Botha & Van Aswegen, 1991, p. 9). Joseph Albrecht, Pierre de Wet and Jamie Uys were pioneering this kind of work (ibid.). But the industry had lost most of its individuality (and even idiosyncrasy and artistry) when it started copying a Western, but particularly American, model of genre films. Before then Afrikaans films had "a contemporary character" (ibid.).

On the one hand *Moedertjie* exemplifies this: it is a tribute to the Afrikaans language - an induction of Afrikaans into the exponentially growing film industry globally. Faure's elocution folds and kneads the sound of the language so that the dialogue, and traces of soliloquy, is slow and lyrical. Moedertjie's lines are presented almost like a prayer or a plea. The play presents us with memories of the "good Afrikaner": one that works the land, one that gets married to a "good girl", one that shares his riches, one that looks after their parents in their old age. This kind of characterisation is perhaps most notable in the constable, played by Carl Richter, who arrests Hennie. He shares his story with us: he had fallen in love with a good woman, he left to serve in the military and she had married someone else by the time he had returned. He went to work in the city so that he could look after his parents. But they fell ill, and with their death he had lost everything. But he perseveres – he has not compromised on his moral direction like Hennie, the lost son.

One might have to be critical about the conservative subject matter and stereotyped characters - the vulnerable, lost Afrikaans girl in the big city, the simple but good folk from the farm and the prodigal son who kills himself after disappointed his mother in an Oedipal twist. The story is clearly critical about the young Afrikaner and her urbanisation. It propagates the idea that staying on the farm and looking after your ageing parents is the only to not "go bad" as Meisie put it (1931, p. 8). The play and film could be criticised for its clichéd reference to the plain-but-happy, "pure" rural existence versus the complicated, compromised urban living and the "loss"

that is experienced by “rural” parents who lose their children to the city with its big, bad wolves. But noting this naivety, it is the theatricality and “un-realism” of the film that makes it a very interesting text.

Joseph Albrecht sets the stage for the next thirty years for the industry with this adaptation of this play. Apart from the “white-washing”, it is a complex little film – dark, claustrophobic and melodramatic with deep gothic notes. The film features very few spaces to maintain its sense of confinement. Other than the small waiting room that is the dominating space, we see an establishing shot of the Koester farmhouse in the Lydenburg-district. There are also shots of an outside door of the house where Moedertjie has the short “dialogue” with Miena and the driveway towards the house right at the start of the film. This sequence does not feature in the play. There are four short sequences of the outside of the waiting room. One where Moedertjie and Oom looks out to the departing train as they arrive in the waiting room, one where Meisie enters the waiting room and chases a man away who is bothering her and one where Hendrik converses with the constable.

There is a very short shot of a small town with a big mine heap in the background – it might be Maraisburg. The constable rides a horse through the town and hears a scream. Albrecht includes one shot of the inside of the locomotive that kills Hendrik, a close shot of the moving wheels of the train and a dramatically styled shot of Hendrik lying dead on the front of the train as the train drives off.

The space of the waiting room is presented as a vacuum. This is achieved through a combination of Albrecht using certain film techniques that will be elaborated on but also what was very early technology and perceptions of what the camera could do. The clear lack of experience shown by

the director contributes significantly to the remarkably claustrophobic "in between-ness" of the dramatic space. The shots are framed as if the space of the waiting room is a stage in a theatre. The camera is notably static. The actors are shot almost exclusively from the front as if the film audience is sitting right behind it. Méliès' comparison of the shape of the proscenium arch of the stage and the screen in film (as mentioned above is very pronounced in *Moedertjie* (Sontag on Méliès in Knopf, 2005, p. 136). With the exception of the cutting of the shots, the camera only in the way that a theatre audience would. The world outside of the waiting room is de-emphasised. The waiting room is the "…constructed space separated from the rest of the world." (du Plooy, 2011, p. 4) The low-key lighting results in dramatic shadows and half lit faces. There are almost no long shots – the actors' bodies are often cut off and Albrecht makes use of very effective close-ups to capture the melodrama. One example of such a shot is when Moedertjie is begging the constable to remove Hennie's handcuffs so that she can say goodbye to him properly. The framing of shots stays tight around the characters so that the excess space, even in that small waiting room, is cut out.

Albrecht's choice to adapt the waiting room in its deliberate isolation works on a metaphoric level to comment on the isolation of the characters – each in their unique circumstances. This also does something remarkable and counter-intuitive to what many people believe cinema is or what the screen can do. A common notion that a film can "open a play up" is often perpetuated by filmmakers who believe that a play really "comes into its own" when it is "realised" by being made into a film. Bazin makes the point in his *What is Cinema?* that poor filmic adaptations of plays often mistake their technical superiority for an aesthetic one (1967, p. 87). When filmmakers talk of opening up a play it usually involves taking the narrative "outside". Directors like to use some of the grandest and most spectacular techniques in cinema's bag of tricks – this might include wide shots, wild movements of the camera, dissolves and cross-fades, exotic

locations and lavish sets. It is important to note that there is nothing implicitly wrong with such adaptations that use typically cinematic techniques. There are very good examples of such films that worked particularly well. Stanley Kaufman uses the examples of Franco Zefferelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968) that is set on location in Italy and Mike Nichols' *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1966) that scopes out the exterior space of George and Martha's house (2005, p. 155). But what is interesting and very exciting to note about *Moedertjie* is that, even with its deeply conservative and westernised subject matter and thematic framework, it chooses to confine cinematic space. Counter to the very influential, large studio film from Hollywood, *Moedertjie* maintains a bare, stark space in the waiting room – framed to add to its isolation and de-emphasis of an external story world. It is within this space that the excess of emotion, the lyricism of the dialogue and almost-soliloquys can take place.[68]

The dark suburbs of stage and screen.

Fourty two years later another film adaptation from a play would employ a similar technique of confining "cinematic" space. In 1971 P.G. du Plessis wrote a play, *Siener in die Suburbs* (*Siener* hereafter). The T.R.U.K. theatre company performed it for the first time on 12 August 1971 in the Breytenbach theatre in Pretoria. Francois Swart directed the play and also the film that was made in 1973. The play was performed many times on stages all over South Africa. *Siener* is set in the southern suburbs of Johannesburg in the 1970s. Tjokkie is twenty eight and clairvoyant. His father went missing in 1945 and his mother (Ma) has been raising him and his half-sister, Tiemie. Tiemie's father came into Ma's life after Tjokkie's father went missing. They are very poor as many families in that area were then and they live in a typical semi-detached house. A man

[68] This has been mentioned before but the way in which *Moedertjie* was shot might have been, again, due to the very limited resources, skills and experience from the filmmakers. As it is one of South Africa's very early films, and the first sound film with dialogue, it might have been a mere experiment – kept as simple as possible. Whether or not this is the case, the film itself is still remarkable in the way it was made – whether or not it was by chance, choice or by necessity.

called Giel often stays over at their house. Giel and Ma are lovers. Giel wants to marry Ma but she refuses. It is unclear whether she is hoping that her husband would return or if she simply doesn't want to lose the pension she gets monthly for being a widow. It might be a combination of both. The playwright describes Giel's attempts to marry Ma as "half-hearted" (Du Plessis, 1971 p. 9).

On a Friday night in the summer of 1970 Giel, played by Louis van Niekerk, finds Tjokkie, played by Don Lamprecht in the backyard fixing an old Buick. We also meet Jakes, played by Marius Weyers, who comes to see Tiemie, Tjokkie's sister played by a very young Sandra Prinsloo. These actors performed the same roles on Swart's stage production. Ma was however played by Tine Balder on stage but Wilna Snyman portrayed her in the film. Tiemie is pregnant by Jakes but she does not want to tell or marry him. Everyone wants Tjokkie to look into the future and tell them what is going to happen. They keep urging him to "see" as they call it. Ma knows that this is very strenuous for Tjokkie and she tries to protect him from it. But she also needs information. She wants to know if her husband will return. Jakes wants to know if the Tiemie's child is his and Giel wants information about which horse to bet on in the races. Giel and Jakes bully and abuse Tjokkie into "seeing" with fatal for consequences for him and his sister.

Swart, who directed both the play and the film, interpreted Geraghty's idea of respect for the chronotext's dramaturgical system when adapting a play in an interesting way. The filmic set is mostly tightly parametered by the borders of Tjokkie's backyard. Director of photography, Koos Roets, together with Swart capture the isolation and disparity of Tjokkie's space and the outside world not only through specific shots, but also through the progression of these shots. The opening sequence consists of an establishing panning shot of the Johannesburg skyline, which then zooms into the façade of Tjokkie's semi-detached, south-suburban house. But the audience

is not allowed to get familiar with what the outside of the house, or the neighbourhood, looks like. There is an abrupt cut to Jakes operating a bulldozer that is demolishing a building. All diegetic sound then disappears into the film score as we see Giel in a fight with someone (it might be the Jew he refers to who wanted to take his "machine" away to cover his debts – Du Plessis, 1971, p. 17) at the races. The next shot is of Tiemie getting into an expensive-looking car with a man that does not feature in the rest of the film. Ma walks out of the house into the backyard where most of the film will be set but the shot lasts only a few seconds. The next shot is a quick cut to the front of the house with Giel walking down the side of the house towards the backyard. He has his "art" in under his arm. The film cuts back to the backyard. The only other sequence that does not take place in the backyard is when Tiemie runs into her room in the house and is attacked by Jakes. This is also the only part of the film that takes place inside the house.

The significance and artistic accomplishment of the use of space in this film lie in the relation between the stark set-like quality of the backyard against the "realist", conventional shots of the "outside world". The shots of these spaces seem to have been taken on-location or constructed in a way to make them look like they were on-location. The space of the backyard is however clearly on-set. It is entirely isolated, enclosed and removed from anything that the viewer might observe on the outside, not only because it occupies such a large of the film, but also because it looks significantly different from the spaces in "the real world". The film does not ignore the world of the play; instead, Swart adapts the chronotext to refract the world of the play by fragmenting it (through the dramatic, strangely-timed cuts) to an extent where it feels like Tjokkie's backyard might be a stage – removed from reality. One implication is that what the audience is about to experience on this "stage" will have no remarkable impact on the rest of

Tjokkie's suburb, or larger urban environment. And this is how Swart achieves the melodrama that is so inherent to both *Siener* texts.

But before starting a discussion on melodrama in the texts, we need to establish how Swart manages to successfully isolate the space of the backyard. The construction of shots and the camera movement play an important part. Swart resists long shots of the backyard. The viewer never observes the space without its characters. There are many mid-shots and close-ups, and similar to what Joseph Albrecht did in *Moedertjie*, Swart sets up character placement in triangular formations that face the direction of the camera as if there is an audience behind it. These stage-like borders that the camera creates operate to de-emphasise the world "off-stage" or, off-screen, in this case. The camera moves closely to the characters, swinging around them and often falling into very conventional shot/reverse shot patterns. An example of this is during one of the first sequences between Giel and Tjokkie. It's important to note the tunnel effect that Swart creates when Tjokkie is underneath the car when he works on it. The first shot like this is also during the first long interaction between Giel and Tjokkie and this is reversed when Giel and Jakes start to bully Tjokkie. The point of view shot from underneath the Buick, up towards the faces of Giel and Jakes, create a shocking low angle that positions the two as dangerous and potentially murderous. In a scene between Ma and Tiemie the camera captures their lament about Ma's failed parenting and Tiemie's loss of innocence and inability to escape her oppressive circumstances. The characters stand next to each other and they are shot in a medium close-up. All the drama of the sequence happens behind their faces. At the end of this sequence Tiemie stands behind Ma as she admits to her struggle with parenting and men in general. For a moment only Tiemie's profile is visible behind Ma's head. The film score is audible over the last part of Ma's confession and plea. It is a tender, tension-filled scene straight out of a soap opera.

The sound in the film is the second component that aids the isolation of the space of the backyard. The diegetic noise of children playing around the neighbourhood sounds inserted and manufactured – and whether this was Swart's intention is irrelevant. The disparate sound amplifies the backyard's stage-like, constructed presence. The film score ranges from gentle to more dramatic and the transition from the last shot where Ma holds her embroidery that is soiled with Tiemie's blood (after Jakes has hurt or killed Tiemie) is very effective. The dramatic cut to the credits through the sudden, loud theme music from the film does not allow the viewer to think or wallow with Ma in her sorrow. The story is disruptively *abandoned* through the unexpected departure to an image of a bloody handprint and the roll of the credits. It is however the film's lighting that might have the heaviest hand in the "displacement" or artificiality of the space of the backyard. Throughout the film the characters are lit in a typically theatrical way. The lights sources are clearly from above and the colours and the shadows that are created are "unnatural" and particularly stage-like. The space of the backyard very clearly does not belong to the rest of the spaces of the Johannesburg southern suburbs. The sequences that take place at night are warm and intimate, as the lighting seems to have been set up *only* to light up the characters. The smoke from Jakes' dagga-cigarette billows dramatically in the warm spotlight and the drama of the sequence of Tjokkie "seeing" is turned up by the halos that the theatre-like lighting creates around the characters' heads. The "seeing"-sequence is remarkably otherworldly.

Thomas Elsaesser writes about the history of the family melodrama with specific reference to "…the development of what one might call the melodramatic imagination…" and "…some structural and stylistic constants in one medium during one particular period (the Hollywood family melodrama between roughly 1940 and 1963)…" (1995, p. 350). He starts by observing the special connection in the melodrama between "…style and technique…" and themes – he notes

this of Douglas Sirk's *Written on the Wind* (1957) in particular (ibid.). Sirk is quoted in saying about the film: "Almost throughout the picture I used deep-focus lenses which have the effect of giving a harshness to the objects and a kind of enamelled, hard surface to the colours. I wanted this to bring out the inner violence, the energy of the characters which is all inside them and can't break through." (ibid.) Elsaesser writes that the sophisticated Hollywood melodramas of the 1940's and 1950's might have been strongly influenced by the romantic drama post-French Revolution and the "…eighteenth-century sentimental novel and the emphasis put on private feelings and interiorized (puritan, pietist) codes of morality and conscience." (1995, p. 352) It is from some of these texts that Elsaesser pinpoints certain "melodramatic elements) that are relevant to both texts of *Siener*: "…plots…which revolve around family relationships, star-crossed lovers, and forced marriages. The villains…demonstrate their political and economic power invariably by sexual aggression and attempted rape, leaving the heroine no other way than to commit suicide or take poison in the company of her lover." (ibid.)

Elsaesser uses examples from D.W. Griffith films to emphasise illustrate how the melodrama (or, "melodramatic effects") can speak about "political themes" by exploring issues of the "personalized plane" (1995, p. 354). "Griffith tailored ideological conflicts into emotionally charged family situations." (ibid.) Elsaesser links melodrama as a *form* to "…dramatic mise-en-scène,…a dynamic use of spatial and musical categories…" (1995, p. 359, *my emphasis*).

Understanding *Siener* in this context of the melodramatic where explorations of personalised turmoil takes centre stage, seems apt within its political timeframe of late 1960s-early 1970s South Africa. Reading the text in this way will surely produce interesting findings. Within the parameters set out for this dissertation in particular, I would rather keep the focus on the text itself and regard the significant occurrence of genre and specific filmmaking techniques. These

aspects have received very little scholarly attention in South African-, and even less so in Afrikaans film criticism and theory. To echo Alexie Tcheuyap's call to contribute to film scholarship by (admittedly within a limited scope): "…foregrounding the narrative, generic, discursive, representational and aesthetic structures of films produced by filmmakers for whom there is no doubt that 'the thematics of anti-imperialism is exhausted' (Mbembe, 2002a, 263)" (Tcheuyap, 2011, p. 28).

Swart makes a great contribution to the genre of melodrama in Afrikaans cinemas with *Siener*. His use of *spatial discontinuity* in the film reverberates the "dramatic discontinuity" in melodramas that Elsaesser describes (1995, p. 370). "Letting the emotions rise and then bringing them suddenly down with a thump is an extreme example of dramatic discontinuity, and a similar, vertiginous drop in the emotional temperature punctuates a good many melodramas…" (Elsaesser, 1995, p. 370, my application)[69]. The characters in *Siener* seem trapped in their dark, 1970s-Johannesburg, lower-middle class suburban space – and the director insists on keeping the audience trapped with them. The heavy symbolism of poverty is embedded in the laundry hanging to dry on a washing line that stretches across the small space. The convergence of the characters around the back door of their house, and the stripped down, broken Buick work in perfect union to charge the undercurrents of emotion that threatens to "boil over" throughout the film.

[69] I'm using Elsaesser's explanation of "dramatic discontinuity" in melodramas to apply it to *Siener* in how the film fluctuates between relatively "standard" emotional threads to highly charged outbursts of emotion. Elsaesser is in fact discussing "dramatic discontinuity" within the particular context of his chosen examples of melodramas (most notably Sirk-films). Also, in his discussion, he notes the interesting symbolic value of the vertical axis of the staircase. In his footnote he makes the comparison between the "dramatic use of staircases…and the famous *Jessner-treppe* of German theater" (Elsaesser, 1995, p. 379, footnote). This link between filmic melodrama and theatre makes *Siener* a very valuable Afrikaans adaptation in how it operates within Kamilla Elliott's looking glass model.

Conclusion.

Swart's filmic text of *Siener* and Albrecht's *Moedertjie* ask interesting questions about adaptations of plays especially when it might look like mere *filmed theatre* at first. A large part of the achievement and value of these films lie in the directors' resistance of what others might have been tempted to "open up". Both films' treatment of space presents the Afrikaans-film scholar with two special cases of adaptations. Both texts have regarded their chronotexts' use of space in the dramaturgical system of theatre and refracted some components quite literally into the scope of the screen. Both directors have locked the audience into the same confined dramatic spaces as the characters in both stories – Moedertjie and her family in the Beckett-esque waiting room[70], waiting for resolution that will never occur, and Tjokkie's backyard, or the even tighter space underneath the broken Buick that will crush him to death.

The borders of the screen in these cases work to de-emphasise the story world outside the specific, dominant settings of the waiting room and the backyard. In this way the texts steer away from types of realism that cinema often likes to convey. Danish director Lars von Trier followed suit in his more contemporary film, *Dogville* (2003). This film is not an adaptation but it explored stage space in a remarkable way. Von Trier mapped out different sections of the actors' "marks" on what looks like a large stage. There were minimal set-pieces – the actors would pretend, as in a play, that there are walls, props, places etc. Von Trier used similar lighting strategies as Koos Roets in *Siener* to emphasise the artificiality of the space of the stage while at the same time de-emphasising the world outside of the screen borders. Von Trier, unlike Francois Swart, had no scenes "off-stage". Beyond the borders of the town of Dogville there is only *literal* darkness. One very noticeable difference between the Von Trier, Swart and Albrecht film sets is how the camera moves in relation to it. Von Trier's camera follows a more

[70] As in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953).

conventionally-Von Trier trajectory between the space and its characters – that is a large range between handheld long shots and close-ups. The camera moves between the characters' spaces as silent observer would. *Moedertjie* and *Siener* however interpret their chronotexts' "audience-space" quite literally. In both texts it is as if the actors are playing across footlights in front of them. Both sets of players stare off and monologue into spaces where, if it were a play, the audience would sit.

Melodrama as a genre is highly effectively employed in both *Moedertjie* and *Siener*. Its conventions play out in both texts in their film aesthetics and dramatic narrative qualities. Linda Williams writes in her chapter in *Refiguring American Film Genres: Theory and History* (Browne, ed., 1998) that melodrama was perceived as a genre that popular cinema had to break away from in order to be validated (Williams, 1998, p. 43). Genre criticism in the sixties was focussed on "…discrete genres whose iconography was recognizable at a glance. In the few places where melodrama was seen to have a visible generic existence – in the family melodrama and the woman's film – melodrama could offer neither the thematic and evolutionary coherence exhibited by, say, the western, nor sufficient cultural prestige to appeal to the cognoscenti – condemned as it was by association with a mass and, above all, "female audience" (ibid.). *Siener* (1973) is therefore ahead of its time in its aesthetics of discontinuity and *constructedness*. The text disregards the critical consensus of the time where "…tragedy and realism were the cornerstones of 'high' cultural value…" (ibid., *my emphasis*).

In conclusion I'd like to note Du Plessis, Swart and Albrecht's brave representations of Afrikaans women. This can be identified as one component of their "radicalism" that Sontag refers to (Sontag in *Theatre and film: a comparative anthology*, 2003, p. 148). The way that the directors have isolated the women as protagonists in their filmic texts was done as a combination of

representational and aesthetic radicalism. Moedertjie is not necessarily portrayed as the lead in Grosskopf's play but Albrecht makes the important creative choice to reposition her to the centre for the film. In his text the dramatic discontinuity, and therefore the melodrama, takes place primarily in this character. The audience perceives her most clearly in two very disparate settings – the more "natural" setting shot on location on her farm, and the darkly staged, choreographed setting of the waiting room.

Ma in *Siener* also occupies a pivotal place in Swart's refraction from the play. This is to say that the function and the position of this character is already present and written into the play – and it is beneficiated for a different medium. The texts give preference and a space to exhibit their sexuality. Ma makes a free choice to live with her partner, Tiemie is experimenting with more than one man and Fé (played by Annette Engelbrecht) expresses the desire to be pregnant with Tjokkie's baby. The deeply conservative timeframe of when the chronotext was written and when the film was made (1971 and 1975) is significant. Both Ma and Tiemie are operating outside of what was (and is, in many places) considered to be "decent" and even permissible. The conservatism of the time and the tendencies to body-shame women if they had the audacity to experiment with their identities is most clearly articulated through the character of Tjokkie. He is ashamed of the sexual endeavours of his mother and his sister. He scolds them about their lifestyles and he is portrayed as "innocent" because of he himself seems sexually reserved when a neighbour girl show interest in him. One reading of these texts might be that it punishes Ma and Tiemie for their "digressions". A form of punishment comes at the end when Tiemie is killed (or hurt very badly) and Ma loses both her children.

I'd like to argue that the mere fact that Du Plessis and Swart made these texts (more than once) and included these characters serve as a significant starting point to commence a dialogue and

attempt representations of three dimensional, nuanced, troubled/untroubled and struggling/happy women. The aesthetic and thematic agency awarded to women in both *Moedertjie* and *Siener* make these adaptations important Afrikaans films. It opens up the possibility for even more films about (and by) women – some of our greatest Afrikaans female characters are eagerly waiting for their moment(s) on screen.

Du Plessis writes a wonderful character description for Ma in *Siener* in the play:

"MA is a woman of fifty, adapted to city life in her small, domestic way. A good person who tries to be modern while suspecting that sin cannot quite be excluded from modernity. She never married again so that she could keep her husband's war pension. He was possibly killed in the North.

She lives in sin with Giel, because the flesh imposes itself on the best of us."

(Du Plessis, 1971, p. 9)[71]

[71] This is my own English translation from the Afrikaans which is significantly more descriptively crafted:

"MA is 'n vrou van vyftig, aangepas op klein huislike wyse by die stadslewe. 'n Goeie mens wat probeer modern wees en half vermoed dat moderniteit nie die sonde heeltemal uitsluit nie.
Ter wille van 'n oorlogspensioen wat sy sedert haar man se moontlike dood in die Noorde ontvang, het sy nooit weer getrou nie.
Omdat die vlees ook die bestes onder ons roep, leef sy in sonde met Giel." (Du Plessis, 1971, p. 9)

CONCLUSION.

MAKING AFRIKAANS FILMS AND ADAPTING AFRIKAANS LITERATURE.

"In the meantime Schlesinger appointed a man called Jan Pienaar. He was a cultural leader and great sport personality from Pretoria. And he had to "keep me in line" as it were… [He had to] see that my use of language was correct and he had to approve the screenplays. He had to "keep me in line". And at some point I had this wonderful idea about the ballet [sequence for the film]. "No, no…[we] can't have a ballet," [said Jan Pienaar]. I said, "Why not, doctor?" And he said the men would all move to the front rows [in the theatre] to look up the skirts of the [ballet] girls [on screen].

That's **how we made movies in the old days…"**[72]

- Pierre de Wet on the making of his film, *Kom Saam Vanaand*, in Episode 2, *Daar Doer in die Fliek*, 2010.

Reading Afrikaans films in the context of African cinemas.

To conclude this dissertation I'd like to briefly return to the broader context within which Afrikaans cinemas find itself i.e. African cinemas. Botha writes that the South African film industry (of which Afrikaans cinemas is a large part) at the end of 1994 needs to be contextualised in the "…history of film production during the colonial and apartheid years." (2012, p. 21). "Apartheid led to an isolation of South African film-makers from their colleagues

[72] This is my own translation from Afrikaans of Pierre de Wet's quote in *Daar Doer in die Fliek* in his recorded interview.

elsewhere on the African continent" (Botha, 2012, p. 153). For a few decades Afrikaans cinemas could have been considered as "privileged" because of its loyal Afrikaans audiences and because of being unfairly funded by the government or advantaged by a subsidy scheme. The roots of this trend can be traced back as far as 1913 when Schlesinger produced the newsreels for *The African Mirror*. "…*The African Mirror* captured current affairs in South Africa, but in a rather superficial manner, and from 1948 it was used as a propaganda tool to support the dominant practice of apartheid" (ibid.) African film scholars from in- and outside South Africa seem to ignore or neglect to include Afrikaans cinemas in their studies. Reasons for this might include that fact that Afrikaans has been known for a long time as the language of the oppressor – a title which it rightly deserves. Afrikaans is also still thought of to be of European origins, even though the one of the first accounts of written Afrikaans was found in South Africa in Arabic in the 1850s and 1860s (Davids, 1987, p. 24). The language is however deeply equated with "whiteness"; with the coloniser.

To exclude Afrikaans cinemas from African film studies is to deny histories. Afrikaans does not belong to one culture of a single race however much the oppressive governments of the past (and perhaps the present) might have wanted people to believe. Apart from the commercial successes, many Afrikaans films have made significant contributions towards opposing apartheid. Films that have been openly critical about Afrikaner nationalism, even at the height of apartheid, have been those of Jans Rautenbach. His three biggest socially critical films are *Die Kandidaat* (1968), *Katrina* (1969) and *Jannie Totsiens* in (1970). In *Die Kandidaat* Rautenbach "…explores the Afrikaner psyche critically and exposes the hypocrisy of those designated as 'super' Afrikaners" (Botha, 2012, p. 63). Botha writes that specific Afrikaner archetypes are identified and criticised but Rautenbach embarks on another milestone regarding discourse around *who exactly the Afrikaner is* (2012, p. 64). The film asks whether Afrikaans-speaking Cape Coloureds

can be considered 'Afrikaners' for which it gets itself involved in conflict with the board of sensors (ibid.). Even asking the question was forbidden during a time of the dominant Afrikaner nationalist agenda. Then Rautenbach made *Katrina*. It is an adaptation of an English play by D. Warner called *Try for White* (ibid.). Katrina attempts to have herself classified under pass laws as white in order to ensure a better future for her and her son. Katrina's son is unaware of his roots and falls in love with a white girl and a white Anglican priest falls in love with Katrina. The film opens up wonderful explorations of identity and shines a bright spotlight on the problematic, unstable and arbitrary classification system of apartheid-South Africa.

It is in his next, ground-breaking, epic canvas of a film, *Jannie Totsiens*, that Rautenbach uses the Afrikaans archetypes he established in *Die Kandidaat* as characters in a mental institution. It speaks openly about the collective psychological pathologies of Afrikanderdom and how it perceived itself. Botha highlights the three types of Afrikaner that end up in the asylum in *Jannie Totsiens*: "[t]he writer Anton du Toit (Cobus Rossouw), the woman who protects the morals of the nation (Hermien Dommisse) and the Dutch Reformed parson (Jacques Loots)" (2012, p. 64). The role of the Dutch Reformed church in South Africa and the ideological framework of the Afrikaner are also explored in the *Roepman* texts in chapter two of this project.

Another very important figure in Afrikaans cinemas in terms of the contribution of Afrikaans to the Struggle and national liberation is a person Botha assigns a chapter to in his book on South African cinemas. Filmmaker Manie van Rensburg explored "…the field of Afrikaner culture through political satire and became on of the leading film-makers in the 113-year history of South African cinema" (Botha, 2012, p. 77). Botha writes how most Afrikaans films of the 1960s and 1970s did not attempt a representational balance of real stories of black, or any non-white for that matter, South Africans (ibid.). Ideological and almost fantastical representations of white

Afrikaans speaking people were privileged. Van Rensburg made very few Afrikaans films and television programmes but his "thematic pre-occupation" was invested in the "…psyche of the Afrikaner within a historical as well as a contemporary context." (Botha, 2012, p. 80) Botha regards him, with Jans Rautenbach, as South Africa's most prominent film auteurs" (2012, p. 81).

Alexie Tcheuyap lists one of the tenets of his study on African film as it being "…in a new context of transnational circulation, [where] nation building has become less prominent, if not absent, motivation in filmmaking…" (2011, p. 1). The application of this idea on Afrikaans cinemas is critical. The only aspect of Afrikaans films that pertains to the "transnational" currently is the unfortunate adoption of the formulaic three act plot structure of the Hollywoodian, heteronormative and entirely tedious romantic comedy e.g. *Semi-soet* (d/Joshua Rous, 2012). What has however very often been prominent from the very earliest stages of Afrikaans cinemas is its objective of nation building. Up until almost two decades ago this concept of nation was compiled mostly of the following: Afrikaans as the primary, official national language, a strict and extensive level of heteronormativity, conservative Christian values, people considered by other self-appointed people to be "white" etc. Many commercially successful Afrikaans films still largely propagate most of these concepts.

Scholars of Afrikaans cinemas might now be able to read Tcheuyap's concept of "transnational circulation" of film, film content and themes as "*transcultural-*", "*trans-dialect-*", "*trans-racial-*" and "*trans-class circulation*" in terms of how the Afrikaans language is alive in different stories from various cultures and communities who speak it around South Africa. Afrikaans nation building still exists – even in popular culture. But is has become obsolete, especially in filmmaking. Propaganda seems relatively absent in films as Afrikaans speaking people now share the general concerns (with some exceptions of course) of other South Africans. With the 1994

liberation Afrikaans language films were made free as well. It no longer benefits in an unfair manner from the state and the Afrikaans cultural institutions (Afrikaans leg of the SABC, the ATKV, Afrikaans arts festivals etc.) seem more and more aware of the critical importance of representing the language in its large diversity as much as possible. As a side note I'd like to mention one group of Afrikaans speaking people who have been entirely ignored in almost all varieties of mediums of Afrikaans stories. Black people who are Afrikaans first language speakers make up a very small group of the South African population. Surely within this relatively new generation of Afrikaans speakers lie a welter of Afrikaans stories to be told.

So, if not nation-building, (mis)representation or propaganda, then what is there to study in Afrikaans films – and especially Afrikaans adaptations? In chapter two I regarded how the novel and film use each other to identify specific elements, in this specific case elements of symbolic value (bodies and water), to explore the possibilities of alternative identities. The *Roepman* texts had an important function in terms of experimentation with boundaries, which many Afrikaans audiences might perceive themselves to operate within. The boundaries in this case have particular reference in the male body that is so often under-prioritised, cut up by medium camera shots and/or destroyed. This convention is challenged in the film, despite the film's general conservatism.

In chapter three I discovered that the two youth novels, *Hanna Hoekom* and *Skilpoppe*, explored the adaptation of first person narrative (an aspect of the novels and films that is also shared by *Roepman*) of two young women. *Hanna Hoekom* made use of some very interesting and innovative film techniques. These included the more predictable choice of the voice-over, but it layered it with animation, dramatisations within dramatisations and a wonderful artificiality through use of the green screen to add to the focus of how mediated Hanna's stories are. Hanna

also opened up a curious consideration of the Author through ideas around the writer-protagonist and the confluence of storytelling over genres and mediums. Odendaal made much more conservative aesthetic choices in *Skilpoppe* with the cross-fades, voice-overs and flashbacks or flashes of imagination shot in the same mise-en-scène as the rest of the shots. Thematically the *Skilpoppe* texts are important because of the way that it challenges traditional ideas of what the Afrikaner nuclear family should be/is.

The adaptations of the plays in chapter four present very worthy filmic texts. Afrikaans films have deep roots in adaptation of Afrikaans literature. The very first sound film with Afrikaans dialogue is a stellar adaptation that shows a deep understanding of and regard for melodrama. The call for Afrikaans plays to be made into films has never been louder. *Faan se Trein*, a play by Pieter Fourie in 1975, has been adapted into a film by Koos Roets and will start showing country-wide late in January 2014. The play has been performed countless times to sold-out audiences - again at Aardklop in 2008 directed by Albert Maritz.

Chapter four looks at two texts about young boys who kill themselves. The two chronotexts were written in 1914 and 1971 respectively. Both adaptations include delicate treatments of the space of the plays and the films. *Moedertjie* takes place mainly in a waiting room by a train station and *Siener* sets its story in the backyard of a poor white Afrikaans family in 1970. Resisting the typical cinematic urge to adapt the chronotext's spaces to exterior locations where the camera can pan or track and behave very "cinematically", both texts seek to isolate the space of the dramatic action. *Moedertjie* does so by incorporating undertones of German expressionism and noir – elevating its melodrama right to the surface of the story. *Siener* de-emphasises the off-screen space and the "outside" of Tjokkie's story world by constructing the film set as if it were on a stage.

The shared thematic concerns of the texts that were selected for this project include, perhaps predictably, a preoccupation with the Afrikaner's identity development but also a study into the dynamic of alternative family structures, which was less expected. The specific adaptations were selected purely because they made for interesting texts. But these are examples of films that showcase the talent and diversity of skillsets of filmmakers making Afrikaans stories. Most of these filmmakers made very sophisticated choices in their adaptations – whether these were intentional or not.

But there are certain large gaps in our catalogue of Afrikaans adaptations. As have been mentioned before, there are hardly any stories about non-white Afrikaans-speaking communities or individuals. Johan Blignaut wrote a play about a strong, complicated woman in a Coloured community looking after her child while struggling to explain or come to terms with her past. He also made a film from the play that consists of an almost entirely Coloured cast. *Mamza* (1985) is a critically important film that bravely told a story about a woman who have not been given that type of representational space in film before. The potential of adaptations from Afrikaans literature is enormous. This is of course not the only sources for possible adaptations – but it is a particularly rich one. Filmmakers are free to discover and explore issues around young Afrikaners in a post-antiapartheid society. Their race, class, dialects and background will deeply inform their stories, but it will by no means limit it. Experimental filmmakers could adapt the work of the late, great playwright Reza de Wet or Willem Anker to investigate cinematic possibilities of screening the Afrikaner psyche in its multiple forms. In this project I discussed two texts considered "youth literature" but both were mainly directed towards *high school* learners. There is however a plethora of stories by writers like Jaco Jacobs, Leon de Villiers and Martie Preller for much younger children that we are yet to see adapted in an Afrikaans animated feature film.

Adaptation is alive, kicking and screaming, in our gigantic libraries of novels, plays, poems, serials and other texts.

REFERENCE LISTS.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Bazin, A., 1967, *What is cinema*? (Volume I), *edited and translated* by Gray, H., University of California Press, Berkeley.

Beckett, S., 1953, *Waiting for Godot: a tragicomedy in two acts*, Faber and Faber, London.

Bluestone, G., 1957, *Novels into film*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Botha, M.P. (*ed*.), 2007, *Marginal lives and painful pasts: South African cinema after apartheid*, Genugtig!, Cape Town.

Botha, M.P., 2012, *South African Cinema 1896 – 2010*, Intellect, Bristol.

Botha, M.P. & Van Aswegen, A., 1992, *Beelde van Suid-Afrika: 'n alternatiewe rolpretoplewing*, RGN Uitgewers, Pretoria.

Breed, C.A., 2007, *Die herskryf van die roman, 'Die swye van Mario Salviati' van Etienne van Heerden as draaiboek, met spesifieke fokus op identiteit, hibriditeit en liminaliteit*, Thesis presented for the degree, Magister Artium, at the North-West University, North-West University, Potchefstroom.

Britz, E., 1990, *Pierre de Wet: 'n ware pionier*, from: *Beeld*, [http://152.111.1.88/argief/berigte/beeld/1990/06/29/3/9.html] Accessed on 30 September, 2013.

Brontë, E., 1847 (originally published) *Wuthering Heights* (a novel), Oxford University Press, Oxford (1995).

Browne, N. (*ed*.), *Refiguring American film genres: theory and history*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Carroll, L., 1865 (originally published) *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (a novel), Puffin, New York (1962).

Carroll, L., 1872 (originally published), *Through the Looking Glass* (a novel), Puffin, New York (1962).

Connell, R.W., 2005, *Masculinities*, 2nd ed., Polity Press, Cambridge.

Davids, A., 1987, *Arabic Afrikaans: a view of the written Afrikaans of the Cape Muslims during the early nineteenth and twentieth centuries*, in: *South African Journal of Linguistics*, vol. 5(1), pp. 24-40.

Diawara, M., 1992, *African cinema today*, in: *African cinema: politics and culture*, Diawara, M. (*ed*.), pp. 140-166, Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

De Saussure, F., 1983, *Course in general linguistics/F. de Saussure*, Bally, A. & Sachehaye (*eds*.), Duckworth, London.

Du Plessis, P.G., 1971, *Siener in die suburbs: 'n spel in drie bedrywe* (a play), Tafelberg, Cape Town.

Du Plessis, P.G., 2008, *Fees van die Ongenooides* (a novel), Tafelberg, Cape Town.

du Plooy, A., 2011, *Space and performance in filmic adaptations of the plays, 'A Streetcar Named Desire', 'Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?' and 'Doubt: a parable'*, BA Honours thesis, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

Eco, U., 1980 (original Italian edition), *The name of the rose* (a novel), Bompiani, Italy.

Elliott, K., 2003, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Elsaesser, T., 1973, *Tales of sound and fury: observations on the family melodrama*, in: *Film genre reader*, Grant, B.K. (*ed*.), 1995, pp. 350-380.

Frindéthié, M.K., 2009, *Francophone African cinema: history, culture, politics and theory*, McFarland, Jefferson, North Carolina.

Gabriel, T.H., 1982, *Third cinema in the third world: the aesthetics of liberation*, UMI Research Press, Michigan.

Geraghty, C., 2008, *Now a major motion picture: film adaptations of literature and drama*, Rowman & Littlefield, London.

Grosskopf, J.F.W., 1926, *In die Wagkamer: 'n noodlotstuk in een bedryf* (a play), Reprinted from *Die Huisgenoot*, 5 February, 1926, Nasionale Pers, Cape Town.

Gugler, J., 2003, *Re-imagining a continent*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

Harrow, K.W., 2007, *Postcolonial African cinema: from political to postmodernism*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

Hermione Stephanie Lombard Faure, from *South African History Online*, [http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/hermione-stephanie-lombard-faure], accessed on 23 September 2013.

Horney, K., 1993, *Feminine psychology*, Norton, New York.

Hough, B., 1998, *Skilpoppe*, 2nd *ed*., Tafelberg, Cape Town.

Hutcheon, L., 2006, *A theory of adaptation*, Routledge, New York.

Kauffman, S., 2005, *Notes on theater-and-film: a comparative anthology*, Knopf, R. (*ed.*), Yale University Press, New York, pp. 334-351.

Kruger, L., *Black atlantics, white Indians and Jews: locations, locutions and syncretic identities in the fiction of Achmat Dangor and others*, *in*: *Scrutiny2*; Vol.7(2), pp.34-50.

Leitch, T.M., 2007, *Film adaptation & its discontents: from 'Gone with the wind' to 'The passion of the Christ'*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

Leitch, T.M., 2008, *Adaptation studies at a crossroads*, in: *Adaptation*, vol. 1(1), pp. 63-77.

Maingard, J., 2007, *South African National Cinema*, Routledge, London.

Meyer, D., 2008, *13 Uur* (a novel), Human & Rousseau, Cape Town.

Nel, M. & Steenkamp, D., (date unknown), *Skilpoppe studiegids* (a study guide), [http://www.google.co.za/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCoQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.nb.co.za%2Fassets%2Fdownloads%2Fteachers_guides%2FSkilpoppe-

studiegids.pdf&ei=qWqdUrraBI-rhAejiYB4&usg=AFQjCNElVILgSLTUXuB01HTc6Ou_a9cxsg&bvm=bv.57155469,d.Yms], accessed on 3 December 2013.

Pople, L., 2011, *116 Jaar van Afrikaanse Flieks*, An interview with Leon van Nierop, News24: [http://m.news24.com/nuus24/Vermaak/Nuus/116-jaar-van-Afrikaanse-flieks-20110701-2] Accessed on 30 September, 2013.

Scarlata, J., 2005, *Carnivals and goldfish: history and crisis in the 'Butcher Boy'*, in Stam, R. & Raengo, A. (eds.), *Literature and film: a guide to the theory and practice of film adaptation*. Blackwell, Australia.

Screen Africa, [author unknown], 2011, [http://www.screenafrica.com/page/news/film/1028440-Roepman-in-historic-US-deal#.UP0o74WWw7A], accessed on 21 January 2013.

Seger, L., 1992, *The art of adaptation: turning fact and fiction into film*, H. Holt & Company, New York.

Solanas, F. & Getino, O., 1970, *Toward a third cinema*, in: *Cinéaste* Vol. 4(3), pp. 1-10, Cinéaste Publishers, New York.

Sontag, S., 2005, *Film and theatre*, In: *Theater and film: a comparative anthology*, Knopf, R. (*ed*.), Yale University Press, New York, pp. 134-151.

Stam, R. & Raengo, A. (eds.), 2005, *Literature and film: a guide to the theory and practice of film adaptation*, Blackwell, Australia.

Tcheuyap, A., 2011, *Postnationalist African Cinemas*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Thackeray, W.M., 1848, *Vanity Fair*, a novel, Bradbury & Evans, London.

Tomaselli, K.G., 1989, *The cinema of Apartheid: race and class in South African film*, Radix, Sandton, South Africa.

Ukadike, N.F., 1994, *Black African cinema*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Van der Vyver, M., 1982, *Van Jou Jas* (a novel), Tafelberg, Cape Town.

Van der Vyver, M., 1987, *Tien vir 'n Vriend* (a novel), Tafelberg, Cape Town.

Van der Vyver, M., 1991, *Eenkantkind* (a novel), Tafelberg, Cape Town.

Van der Vyver, M., 1992, *Griet skryf 'n sprokie* (a novel), Tafelberg, Cape Town.

Van der Vyver, M., 2002, *Die Ongelooflike Avonture van Hanna Hoekom* (a novel), Tafelberg, Cape Town.

Van der Vyver, M., 2007, *The Hidden Life of Hanna Why* (a novel), translated by Seegers, K.L., Tafelberg, Cape Town.

Van Dyk, A., 2012, *Die herskrywing van 'n roman na 'n draaiboek met verwysing na die roman en film 'Roepman'*, unpublished BA Honours thesis, University of Stellenbosch.

Van Heerden, E., 2000, *Die swye van Mario Salviati* (a novel), Tafelberg, Cape Town.

Van Niekerk, M., 1994, *Triomf* (a novel), Tafelberg, Cape Town.

Van Tonder, J., 2004, *Roepman* (a novel). Human & Rousseau, Cape Town.

Van Tonder, J., 2006, *Stargazer* (a novel). Translated by Elsa Silke. Human & Rousseau, Cape Town.

Verster, F. 2011. *Roepman in die Kloof, met Jan.* http://www.litnet.co.za/Article/roepman-in-die-kloof-met-jan-, *Litnet*, Accessed on 21 January 2013.

Williams, L., 1998, *Melodrama revised*, in: *Refiguring American film genres: theory and history*,

Zacks, S.A., 1995, *The theoretical construction of African cinema*, in: *Research in African literatures*, Vol. 26(3), pp. 6-17, Indiana University Press, Indiana.

Filmography.

Abismos de passion (aka *Wuthering Heights),* 1953, d/Luis Buñuel, Plexus Films, 90 minutes.

Arashi ga oka (aka *Wuthering Heights*), 1988, d/Kiju Yoshida, Mediactuel, Saison Group & Seiyu Production, 143 minutes.

As jy sing, 2013, d/André Odendaal, Fix Post Production.

Butcher boy, The, 1997, d/Neil Jordan, Geffen Pictures, 110 minutes.

Daar doer in die fliek, 2011, written/Leon van Nierop, MNet Productions, 26 episodes.

Die geheim van Nantes, 1969, d/Dirk de Villiers, Kavalier Films, 99 minutes.

Die kandidaat, 1968, d/Jans Rautenbach, Emil Nofal Productions, 105 minutes.

Die ongelooflike avonture van Hanna Hoekom, 2010, d/Regardt van den Bergh, kykNET & Spookasem Films, 90 minutes.

Dogville, 2003, d/Lars von Trier, Zentropa Entertainments et al, 178 minutes.

Dr Kalie, 1968, d/Ivan Hall, Kavalier Films, 95 minutes.

Fiela se kind, 1987, d/Katinka Heyns, Sonneblom Films and Starcorp International Pictures, 105 minutes.

Hans die skipper, 1953, d/Bladon Peake, 95 minutes.

Hoor my lied, 1967, d/Elmo de Witt, Kavalier Films, 90 minutes.

House of mirth, The, 2000, d/Terence Davies, Arts Council of England, Diaphana Films & FilmFour, 140 minutes.

Jakhalsdans, 2010, d/Darrell Roodt, Makadi Entertainment Ventures, 93 minutes.

Jannie Totsiens, 1970, d/Jans Rautenbach, Sewentig Films, 114 minutes.

Katrina, 1969, d/Jans Rautenbach, Emil Nofal Productions, 101 minutes.

Liefling – die movie, 2010, d/Brian Webber, Hartiwood Productions, 114 minutes.

Lyklollery, 2001, d/Francois Coertze, Abyss Productions.

Mamza, 1985, d/Johan Blignaut, Everis Films, 90 minutes.

Moedertjie, 1931, d/Joseph Albrecht, African Film Productions, 30 minutes.

Môre môre, 1973, d/Elmo de Witt, Elmo de Witt Films, 104 minutes.

My broer se bril, 1972, d/Dirk de Villiers, Bevil Films, 101 minutes

Name of the rose, The, 1986 , d/Jean-Jacques Annaud, Neue Constantin Film, Cristaldifilm & Les Films Ariane, 130 minutes.

Ouma se slim kind, 2006, d/Gustav Kuhn, Southern Sky Pictures, 94 minutes.

Pervert's guide to cinema: parts 1, 2, 3, The, 2006, d/Sophie Fiennes, presented by Slavoj Žižek, Lone Star, Mischief Films & Amoeba Film, 150 minutes.

Platteland, 2011, d/Sean Else, Philo Films, Mozi Films & Breakwood Trading.

Proteus, 2003, d/John Greyson & Jack Lewis (uncredited), Pluck Productions, 100 minutes.

Roepman, 2011, d/Paul Eilers, Bosbok Ses Films & The Film Factory, 115 minutes.

Sarie Marais, 1931, d/Joseph Albrecht, African Film Productions.

Semi-soet, 2012, d/Joshua Rous, Scramble Productions.

Siener in die suburbs, 1973, d/Francois Swart, Quadro Films, 89 minutes.

Sonkring, 1989, Scholtz Films, two seasons.

Skilpoppe, 2004, d/André Odendaal, Penguin Films, 95 minutes.

Snip en Rissiepit, 1973, d/Elmo de Witt, Kavalier Films, 100 minutes.

Verraaiers, 2013, d/Paul Eilers, Bosbok Ses Films, The Film Factory & Spier Films, 122 minutes.

Vyfster, 1982-1986, d/Regardt van den Bergh & Sias Odendaal, Kinnerland & Brigadiers, 14 episodes.

Wolwedans in die skemer, 2012, d/Jozua Malherbe, Balt Media & Film Factory.

Written on the wind, 1956, d/Douglas Sirk, Universal International Pictures, 100 minutes (re-release).

Wuthering Heights, 2011, d/Andrea Arnold, Ecosse Films, Film4 et al, 129 minutes.

FILMIC ADAPTATIONS OF AFRIKAANS NOVELS, YOUTH LITERATURE, STAGE PLAYS, RADIO SERIALS, POEMS, SHORT STORIES AND MAGAZINE SERIALS: 1931 - 2014							
	DIRECTOR	YEAR	AFRIKAANS FILM	AFRIKAANS LITERATURE	YEAR	AUTHOR	GENRE
1	Joseph Albrecht	1931	*Moedertjie*	*In die wagkamer*	1914	J.F.W. Grosskopf	play
2	Bladon Peake	1953	*Hans die skipper*	*Hans-die-skipper*	1932	D.F. Malerbe	short story
3	Elmo de Witt	1965	*Debbie*	*Groen koring*	1948	Tryna du Toit	novel
4	Sven Persson	1968	*Raka*	*Raka*	1941	N.P. van Wyk Louw	poem
5	Dirk de Villiers	1969	*Die geheim van Nantes*	*Die geheim van Nantes*	1973	Pieter Treurnicht	radio serial
6	Elmo de Witt	1970	*Sien jou môre*	*Die belydenis van Nelia Bell*	1964	W.A. de Klerk	novel
7	Dirk de Villiers	1972	*My broer se bril*	*My broer se bril: 'n riller in drie bedrywe*	1969	Dirk de Villiers	play
8	Daan Retief	1972	*Salomien*	*Rondomtralie*	1972	Elsabé Steenberg	magazine serial
9	Elmo de Witt	1972	*Die Wildtemmer*	*Die Wildtemmer*	1972	Willie van Rensburg	radio serial
10	Bertrand Retief	1973	*Seun van die Wildtemmer*	*Die Wildtemmer*	1972	Willie van Rensburg	radio serial
11	Francois Swart	1973	*Siener in die Suburbs*	*Siener in die Suburbs: 'n spel in drie bedrywe*	1971	P.G. du Plessis	play
12	Elmo de Witt	1973	*Snip en Rissiepit*	*Snip en Rissiepit*	1973	Jan Scholtz	radio serial
13	Dirk de Villiers	1973	*Die wit sluier*	*Die wit sluier*	1973	Naomi van Niekerk	radio serial
14	Sias Odendaal	1975	*Somer*	*Somer*	1935	C.M. van der Heever	novel
15	Franz Marx	1978	*'n Seder Val in Waterkloof*	*'n Seder Val in Waterkloof*	1977	P.G. du Plessis	play
16	Johan Blignaut	1985	*Mamza*	*Mamza*	1985	Johan Blignaut	play
17	Katinka Heyns	1987	*Fiela se Kind*	*Fiela se kind*	1985	Dalene Matthee	novel
18	Johan Bernard	1992	*'n Pot vol winter*	*'n Pot vol winter*	1989	Maretha Maartens	youth novel
19	Frans Nel	1992	*'n Wêreld sonder grense*	*'n Wêreld sonder grense*	1984	Alexander Strachan	novel
20	André Odendaal	2004	*Skilpoppe*	*Skilpoppe*	1998	Barrie Hough	youth novel

21	Michael Raeburn	2008	*Triomf*	*Triomf*	1994	Marlene van Niekerk	novel
22	Regardt van den Bergh	2010	*Die ongelooflike avonture van Hanna Hoekom*	*Die ongelooflike avonture van Hanna Hoekom*	2002	Marita van der Vyver	youth novel
23	Paul Eilers	2011	*Roepman*	*Roepman*	2004	Jan van Tonder	novel
24	Jozua Malherbe	2012	*Wolwedans in die skemer*	*Wolwedans in die skemer*	1982	Leon van Nierop	radio serial
25	Koos Roets	2014	*Faan se trein*	*Faan se trein*	1975	Pieter Fourie	play